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GLIMPSES OF GOD, AND OTHER SERMONS.

BY

B. GWERNYDD NEWTON,
PASTOR FRANKLIN AVENUE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
CLEVELAND, OHIO.

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TO MY BROTHER,
REV. GEORGE TALALUN NEWTON,
TO WHOM I AM INDEBTED MORE THAN TO ANY OTHER
MAN, FOR MY "GLIMPSES OF GOD," THIS
VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED.

*“Lo, these are parts of His ways : but how little
a portion is heard of Him ? but the thunder of His
power who can understand ?” —JOB 26: 14.*

PREFACE.

These sermons are published at the request of my church and congregation, who hope in this way to pay off the debt on our church building. This plan was adopted because it promised to be the simplest, surest and most satisfactory method of realizing the necessary amount. While it affords ample opportunity for all to work, it burdens none. It gives us the privilege of appealing to the Christian public for aid, and the satisfaction of giving something in return. No profit will accrue to the author until all the debt is paid. We hope the volume will be found well worth the money expended upon it. If we had not this hope, it would never have been published.

B. G. N.

Franklin Avenue Congregational Church,
Cleveland, Ohio, May 31, 1897.

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GLIMPSES OF GOD.

THE REQUEST.

“And he said, ‘I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.’”—
Exodus 33: 18.

Wherever man is found, there God is sought. Inquiry concerning the Infinite is man's most imperative impulse. The most universal and unavoidable craving of the human soul is for the Divine. Man's most absorbing ambition and aim is to acquaint himself with the Almighty. It is his most urgent and unceasing need, unconscious oft, unsatisfied ever, until the Universal Father is seen. While the soul lives, this desire will never die. As the soul is immortal and the intellect indestructible, so is the spirit of inquiry concerning the Infinite imperishable. Conscience creates in man, in all climes and conditions, a craving for the Creator. The supreme search of the soul is the search for the Supreme. As all streams seek the sea, and sparks soar toward the sun, so seeks the soul satisfaction

in the Supreme. Human history is hope soaring heavenward, though oft falling to earth like a bird with a broken wing. All created energies converge toward, center and culminate in the Creator. Every intellect is instinct with the inspired impulse to seek for God. This emphasizes the two essential truths of religion,—that there is a God, and that God may be known. If there is no God, whence this universal instinct? If God can not be known, why this universal impulse? Nature is never false, but ever true. Hence, to believe that she is universally, unceasingly and uniformly untrue, is unwarranted and unreasonable. This primitive and permanent prompting of the universal heart is a pre-eminent pledge and potent proof of the personality of God. Without a personal God, this prompting could not be; with this prompting, a personal God could not but be. A personal God alone accounts for the prompting, and the prompting is satisfied only in a personal God. Thus, the religious instinct demands faith in God, and faith in God necessitates faith in a revelation of God. That which is universal and unavoidable can not be unwarranted, or long remain unsatisfied. The deeper the soul's consciousness of God, the mightier moves the mind, like a rushing river, seeking the ocean of the Eternal. What wonder, then, that

Moses, the "man of God," should break forth in the impassioned appeal, "Show me Thy glory." He but voiced the deep yearning of every soul that has awakened to its own possibilities, and become conscious of its own need. Yea, verily, he echoed in those words the cry of the universal heart, for what all men need and seek, consciously or unconsciously, is to know God. The irrepressible instinct to seek the Infinite finds expression in innumerable ways, but satisfaction in one way only—seeing the glory of God. The human heart yearns for God, and for a God which it can know and love. So that there is a sense in which the request of Moses is typical of the request of every man, and this brings us to our subject—*The Request*.

"I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory."

The spirit of this request is rational, religious, and royal, while in form it is possibly wanting in all these qualities.

I. THIS REQUEST IS RATIONAL.

It presupposes not only that it is possible to know God, but that to some extent He is already known. It can not but imply three things in the soul that conceived it: a conviction of the existence of God, a craving for a closer contact with Him, and a consciousness of an unworthy and unsatisfying concep-

tion of Him. Thus, this request for a special revelation of Jehovah is an acknowledgment that He has already revealed Himself, for there could be no desire for a greater, if the less great had not been given and appreciated. The text, therefore, implies that —

(a) *Glimpses of God are possible.* Men deny to-day the possibility of securing glimpses of God. He is looked upon by the agnostic as the great Unknown and Unknowable. These terms are emphatically and effectually denied in the experience of every true worshipper of the Father. If He is unknowable, He can not be God. Man's progress, mental and moral, is determined by his knowledge of, and conformity to, truth. If God, who is by hypothesis good, reserves to Himself what He might reveal with benefit to man, He denies Himself. Any charge substantiated against the goodness of Jehovah is a denial of His Divinity. Selfishness is wrong in man, and can not be right in God. A being who hides truth that would help others in the pursuit of happiness is selfish, and selfishness is sin. A God of love can not but in love make Himself known. God, without power and desire to make Himself known, and man without power and desire to know God, are to us self-contradictions. The human mind possesses

power to communicate with, and seeks to influence mind. Is the Infinite mind less gifted, or the Infinite heart less gracious? Man, without the desire to know his Maker, is unknown. He has been created to glorify God, and wisely endowed with faculties that are useless, save in this sacred service. The supreme function of the soul is to serve the Supreme. The divinest power in man is his power to commune with the Divine. Sanctified communion with God is the secret of spiritual conformity. Communion and conformity between beings destitute of the faculty of communication are contradictions. If God has endowed man with useless faculties, and planted in his soul impulses and powers which can never be exercised or satisfied, He has created him in a manner unkind, unwise, and unjust, therefore unlike God. We know of no instinct in the vast world, but may find ample opportunities to be satisfied in the exercise of its function. Are we to believe that God has created the profoundest instinct of the soul to belie and mock it? No, a thousand Noes. The craving of man's heart for the Divine, and the thirst of his soul for knowledge of God, are sufficient proofs that glimpses of God are possible. If God can not be known, man has no responsibility; duty is an idle word, without meaning. Duty implies obligation. Where there is no

knowledge there can be no obligation, and where there is no obligation there is no God. But the "I ought" of humanity is universal. Whence comes it, if God has not revealed Himself? The moral sense in man necessitates belief in a moral ruler, and this implies revelation. The human conscience in its wonderful evolution, with its increase of light on moral questions from decade to decade, is simply inexplicable, if God has not revealed Himself. Man's mental and moral natures demand for their completeness a revelation of the mind of God. Faith in the revelation of God is only the unavoidable counterpart of belief in the existence of God. Whoever believes that God is, and that He is love, must of necessity believe that glimpses of God are possible. Whatever a man's philosophical or theological definition of Hell may be, its soul must ever remain—the hidden face of God. No greater Hell is possible than to be removed permanently from the presence of the Almighty, where all communication with Him is impossible. A being therefore who hides himself of choice, when the happiness of myriads of men is ruined thereby, may be a devil, but a God—never. The goodness of God seeks the happiness of all His creatures, and this is best realized in revealing His own goodness.

(b) *Glimpses of God are actual.* This means

that in mercy He has made Himself known to man. This He has done in different modes and divers manners, by natural and supernatural means, in man's mental, moral and spiritual natures. God has revealed Himself in a natural revelation, in the material, mental and moral world.

1. God speaks to man in the material universe. All things created demonstrate the majesty of the mind and the eternal power of the Creator, "for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." No being equipped with intellectual faculties, need fail to find in Nature, if he be anxious, a clear testimony to the existence of God, and of His sovereign will. The reasoning faculty with which man is endowed will enable him, through a mental process, to arrive at an intellectual knowledge of God. Mind intuitively demands a cause for every effect, and moreover, that every cause be as great, or greater, than the effect. It is a truism that like alone produces like. The inference is therefore natural, if not irresistible, that the mind expressed in the material universe demands for its creative cause an intelligent, personal Being. The utility of creation

and its beneficent laws indicate the wisdom of the Creator. Everything in Nature expresses, according to its several ability, the majesty of the mind of its Maker. Her every voice echoes the voice Divine. The inanimate world speaks only what God to it has spoken. He told the lily to be white and beautiful, and all she sweetly says is, "Be white and beautiful." He said to the sun, "Let thy light shine," and all that the sun has ever said is, "Let thy light shine." Inanimate nature is instinct with the impulse to inspire the intellect with increased interest in the Infinite. Comets and constellations, stars and suns, illuminate the pathway to the mind of the Eternal. Their light lend they in love, to lead the lost back to the Lord of Life. Each solitary star in the sky strives to stimulate the soul to seek the Supreme. Every beam of light is brimful of love, as it seeks to illuminate the temple of the soul with the light of faith. The birds, in melodious song make known their Maker. The balmy breezes bring benediction, and breathe blessing upon each burning brow, as softly they whisper "Hope thou in God." The murmuring brook, with its minor music, as it quenches the thirst of man and beast, tells the best it can of the love and care of God for his creatures. The perennial spring, as it mirrors Heaven, shows the soul how it may mirror God,

Every flower that cools and caresses with sweet perfume the cruel foot that crushes it, gives man a lesson in forgiveness, and whispers in death, "God is love." Thus, everything in the material universe, from the starry sky to the sands of the sea, from the dewdrop which glitters in the morning sunlight to the mighty restless deep, blend their voices in saying to him who hath ears to hear, "Have faith in God."

2. God reveals Himself in man's mental nature. The human mind is only an expressed thought of the mind Divine. The mind of man in its majesty mirrors faithfully, though faintly, the mind of the Eternal. In all its manifold movements it manifests the creative energy of the mind of God. Every thought evolved, every truth recognized, every discovery made, adds new emphasis and force to the clear and constant testimony of the finite mind to the Infinite. Every faculty and power with which the human intellect is endowed are lenses in its telescope, which enable the observer to secure glimpses of God. Man has been created in the image of God, and like Him, he is able to think, yea, and to think like Him, for he thinks God's thoughts after Him. The pleasures secured in intellectual pursuits, and the joys of contemplative thought, demand for their completion and crown, the Infinite, who alone can

account for, and satisfy the mind. The mind of man is meaningless, unless there be a mightier mind with which it can communicate, and on which it can meditate,—a mind mighty enough to move it to muse and to mould its musings. The human mind is meditative, because the divine mind is communicative. A meditative human mind is inexplicable without a communicative divine mind. The intellectual nature of man receives its inspiration and satisfaction only in an intelligent, infinite, personal Creator. Mind mirrors its Maker.

3. God reveals Himself in man's moral nature. The soul of every natural revelation of God is the revelation of God in the soul. The soul of what Nature speaks of the Supreme is what the Supreme speaks in the soul. Man's moral nature most mirrors God, for it is most like the God it mirrors. The soul doth most bear the image of God; and the soul that doth the image of God most bear is the soul most like the image it bears. Conscience,—the Shekinah in the sanctuary of spirit, the manifestation of God's presence and glory, the royal representative of righteousness in the realm of reason, the advocate of God in the soul's tribunal, the ethical echo of the Eternal,—is a revelation of God in the soul. Thus, the deepest, divinest and most indestructible portion of our being bears distinct testi-

mony to the nature and character of God, and gives us glimpses of His glory. The sense of responsibility in man is in itself a revelation. The universal sense of obligation in the human soul is inexplicable, without God; with Him, nothing is more natural. The soul craves the Creator, and if it fail to find Him, it creates its own God. This instinct which is universal, and this impulse of worship which is imperative, surely indicate the existence of God. Man is ever conscious of a sense of obligation and a feeling of responsibility. In manifold ways, he instinctively seeks to atone for any omission in the fulfillment of his supposed duty. Conscience becomes more exacting decade after decade. The moral sense of right and wrong constantly becomes keener. The soul is ever becoming more sensitive to the sense and shame of sin, and society more imperative in its demands for personal purity and national righteousness. Justice, truth and purity, hope, faith and charity are appreciated to-day as never before. We look upon as vices what our fathers looked upon as virtues. This ethical evolution of conscience, without God, and without the light of God in the soul, is a mystery of mysteries. The soul, each time it utters "I ought," confesses God. All sorrow, suffering and shame experienced because of sin, every pleasure or joy

realized because of virtue, declares—there is a God. All sense of guilt, every attempt to atone for sin, is imperishable evidence of the existence of a moral ruler. Thus are glimpses of God possible to all anxious to secure them, in the material, mental and moral world. They may be realized only through the right use of proper methods, the right employment of proper faculties, and careful conformity to the laws of investigation. This knowledge of God can not be secured unless the soul seek it, and he who seeks well will ever be successful in his search. The revelation will not appeal, however, with the same force to all minds, for the greater the mind and the more reverential the spirit, the greater will be the realization and the deeper the appreciation of the glimpses secured. Different evidences appeal with varying convincing force to various minds, and this ethical and intellectual knowledge of God will not influence or inspire all alike. Nevertheless, glimpses are accessible to all and should be invaluable to all, as a potent though primitive proof, of the presence and pre-eminence of a personal Creator in the universe. The glimpses of God secured in the material world will move most mightily the poet, while the ethical knowledge of God, the revelation secured in the moral realm, will move most mightily the matter-of-fact moralist. We will receive from

Nature whatever we invest, with proportionate interest. The scientist will secure the secrets of science, the poet poetry, the theologian theology, and all who seek for the Infinite, glimpses of God. The more intelligence and interest, sympathy and sincerity we invest in Nature, the more will we be able to draw on her bank book, of interest and capital. Nature speaks many languages, but is polite enough, unvaryingly, to clothe her answer in the tongue in which she has been addressed. She is ever like a loving, though not over-indulgent mother, who always gives good gifts to her children, but ever with kind and deep discrimination. If any ask a fish, she will never give a serpent. If any ask bread, she will never give a stone. Her gifts, however, are ever determined by the nature of the request and the spirit of the recipient. He who seeks for coal will never discover a comet. He who studies the sky will learn the secret of the stars, and not the song of the sea; he will learn the lesson of law in the language of light, and not the lesson of love in the language of the leaves and the lily. Each will gather from Nature only that which corresponds to what he already possesses. "To him that hath it shall be given" is a law of nature as well as grace. Hence, some become proficient in one branch of study, some in another, and in his

special field is each most likely to find God. Man's head invariably follows his heart. He will ever learn to know what he loves, and that only as he loves to know. Thus, the glimpses of God in Nature always come to man through the royal road of loyal love. The astronomer will be borne in a chariot of light, over a fiery pathway to the presence of Jehovah. Every ray of light pencils for him, in rich and royal radiance, the glories of the Creator. The poet, with a devout spirit, will bend the knee in the temple of beauty, to do homage to the God who painted the lily and robed the rose. Nevertheless, the knowledge of God learned from Nature's open book, though of inestimable value, fails to satisfy the soul's craving. Nay rather, it intensifies the longing of the human heart, increases man's ambition, and inspires him with new aspiration for a clearer and worthier conception of the Divine. Nature can never appease the hunger of the soul. She but wings hope, fires faith, and inspires love to move in quest of God. The glimpses of God gleaned from the fertile fields of Nature are inefficient to qualify man to realize the purposes of his Creation, therefore a superior revelation is imperative. The necessity demands the supply. The yearning of the soul for God is a prophecy and a pledge of God-given satisfaction. The promptings of the

human heart and the revelations of Nature are God-given promises of greater revelations of Himself, and God must be faithful to His own promises. A good God must seek the good of all His creatures. Man is happy only as he is good, and good only as he knows God. He can not know God only as God in love makes Himself known. Man needs God, and is constrained thereby to seek Him. This God-given desire and Godward tendency of the soul must inevitably, by the law of love, crystallize into actual glimpses of God. Granted that God is love, and it is granted that the best revelation possible to the best love is given to man. Love claims love, and the best love demands the best of which love is capable. The Infinite Mind can be satisfied only in the satisfaction of the mind it has created. Mind in its majesty seeks to mould and move mind. It can not but be communicative and seek affinities. All who believe in an intelligent God must believe in a revelation of Him. The possibility of every revelation depends upon God's desire to make Himself known, and man's ability to appreciate the revelation given. The goodness of all intelligent beings in the universe depends upon their knowledge of God. Therefore, a God of love can not withhold the highest manifestation possible of Himself, from those anxious to receive it. When Moses

cried "Show me Thy glory," the request was perfectly rational, for already he had received special manifestations of the majesty, the mind, and the mercy of God. The knowledge thus secured, though of much greater value than the revelation of nature, only led him to expect and to seek a higher manifestation of God's glory. There are times in a man's history when the responsibility of life would crush him, were it not possible for him to be relieved and strengthened by glimpses of God. No one in his century, or probably in any previous century, needed or received such glorious manifestations of the divine majesty as the "Man of God." Nobly had they been received, and none the less nobly had they been reproduced in his life. He possessed in a high degree all the necessary qualifications to apprehend and appreciate God's natural and supernatural revelations. He had a genius for poetry and prophecy. His eye was searching, his ear sensitive, his heart sympathetic, and these are the three imperative conditions of prophetic and poetic insight. But few men have ever walked this planet who were able to appreciate or interpret Nature as Moses. Nature kept but few secrets from him who loved her so well. He secured a keener insight into the mysteries of Creation, and beheld more of the glory of the Creator than any man before him. Day by day,

under the inspiration of God, had he stood in the Genesis of creation, witnessing chaos charmed into cosmos, and privileged to behold the birth of light, law and life. He heard the divine voice, whose echo is the inspiration of all life and beauty, calling into being the universe. He listened with enraptured soul to the music of those words, so fraught with creative energy, and, lost in adoration, he gazed on the first miracle of resurrection—life ushering forth from the tombs and vaults of death, dead matter becoming vivified with light, instinct and animated with life. He stood by the cradle of creation, looked with inspired eye on the evolution of life, and saw infinite space blossom into teeming worlds. He heard, with inspired ear, every melodious sound of which Nature's harp is capable. He was present at every concert given by the creation, up to his day. He listened to the sweet melody of the morning stars when they sang together, and was charmed when Nature's sublime symphony rendered for the first time the Hallelujah chorus. He listened so well that he learned every note of Nature's glorious anthem. He saw the Garden of Eden, clothed in matchless beauty and adorned with royal robes, full of fragrance, blush when first introduced to the morning sunlight. Moses has enriched the world with a history of the Genesis of creation, which must

ever remain, because it is simple, salutary and sufficient, the most fascinating and satisfying interpretation of the origin of Nature. The eye of Moses, quickened and illuminated by the inspiration of the Almighty, had looked upon all the glorious manifestations of the divine mind that had ever been granted to man. His ear had treasured every vibration of the divine voice, which had ever reached human ears, from the time it was first heard when God walked in the garden, in the cool of the day, until it had commanded him to present himself on Mount Sinai. He heard the first question addressed to man, which fell from the divine lips, and the first promise of the Redeemer of the race. He understood God's purpose in calling Abraham, to raise a peculiar people, for Himself. Already God had spoken to him, face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. He had seen the glory of Jehovah as had no other. He was one of the greatest prophets and the first inspired revealer of divine truth. He was God's chosen ambassador to Pharaoh, the anointed deliverer of His chosen people, the emancipator of Israel. He was not only elected of Heaven to be a leader and law-giver to the people, but a personified conscience to the world. No one had secured a clearer conception of the Creator's purposes, or given such a sublime expression of them

to man. Having thus been so gloriously endowed with privileges and crowned with such glorious glimpses of God, is it any wonder that he should long for more, and cry "Show me Thy glory?" Nay, having been permitted to understand so well the divine secrets, not to show his appreciation by seeking to know still more, would be unnatural, and unworthy. The practical value, for himself and people, of the revelations already received could not but force a rational being to seek a greater vision. Nevertheless, to know precisely what Moses desired, when he said "Show me Thy glory," is involved in much difficulty, and enveloped in much mystery. It is much easier to say negatively what the request does not mean, than to state positively what it does mean. It could not be a prayer for a sensuous exhibition of God's majesty, or simply a desire for an external display of divine power and glory. He had seen enough of such manifestations. It could not mean that he expected in some miraculous way to be able to comprehend God. He was too wise a man and knew himself and Jehovah too well to have entertained such a wild desire. Could the greatest historian, if not the only historian of the world, for two thousand years, a man intellectually and spiritually head and shoulders above the rest of mankind, become so unreasonable as to expect that

the finite mind could comprehend the Infinite? The character of Moses, as seen in the light of history, demands that we exonerate him from the charge of making so irrational a request. Still, he asked to see the "glory" of God. What does this mean? Whatever answer we make, it must be granted that he longed for a revelation not already received, some vision not yet secured. Moreover, it must be conceded that he craved a higher and worthier conception of God's character, a clearer understanding of His purposes, and a nearer approach to His divine heart. Indeed, everything in the history of the transfiguration of Moses suggests that what he really wanted, whether he was conscious of it or not, was a manifestation of God's spiritual nature. But just what the "glory" means must more or less be a matter of conjecture, for everything belonging to God is full of His glory.

II. THIS REQUEST IS RELIGIOUS.

It is simply the ambition of a religious man to understand more of the mind, and to get nearer the heart, of his Father in Heaven. It is a pleading of a soul enraptured with the contemplation of the divine character, for a more understanding heart, a broader view, a keener and more appreciative insight, into the glorious mysteries and perfections of

His being. Surely, this is not only a worthy, but the most devout ambition possible to the human soul. To seek that knowledge of the Father which deepens our own spiritual life, and fills us with increased power to serve others, can not but be well pleasing in the sight of Heaven. The spirituality of the soul depends on its spiritual yearnings, and this request of Moses is the winged desire of the soul for that spiritual insight, without which deep religious life is impossible. When the soul is dissatisfied with its spiritual attainment, and yearns for a more spiritual conception of God, it is moved by the divinest impulse. Man instinctively seeks to know God. The more he knows of Him, the more will he desire to know, and the more he desires to know the more he will know. As the spiritual life deepens, the soul's ambition to know God is intensified. The nearer we are permitted to draw to the heart of Jehovah, the more earnest and sincere the cry of the soul—"Show me Thy glory." To understand the religious character of this desire of Moses, it is necessary that we take into consideration the circumstances under which it was expressed. We must needs look upon the Man of God, bowed down by sorrow and filled with unutterable grief because of the idolatry of the people at the foot of the mount made holy by the divine presence. We

must listen to his intercession, his pathetic pleading with God to forgive their sin, and learn to appreciate the promise of God's continued favor. Then, and then only, will we learn what moved Moses to cry, "Show me Thy glory." His request had a practical bearing on his own life and duty, in that crisis in the history of the people. He had lost confidence in himself, and in the people, and was in sore need of every help to increased faith in Jehovah. His faith in himself was shaken, because he had so forgotten himself when he stood face to face with Israel's sin. The most patient of men burned with righteous indignation and was moved in wrath at the sight of the golden calf, and taking vengeance into his own hands, with the aid of those on the Lord's side, he slew three thousand men, as if love, —forgiving love,—was foreign to his nature. And yet how he loved these people! No human love was ever deeper, or more self-sacrificing. Hear him as he pleads with God to forgive their transgression, or to blot his name out of the Book of Life. Could any love be stronger? Not only stronger than death, but stronger than the desire for immortality. His prayer was heard, his petition granted, and a promise given of Jehovah's continued presence to aid the prophet and to bless the people. But how his faith in the people had weakened! How could he ever

again have confidence in them? Had they not, near the mount made terrible by the presence of Jehovah, been guilty of inexcusable idolatry? He despaired of ever accomplishing the work laid on his heart to do—making these people obedient and faithful to the God of Heaven. From himself, his thoughts would turn to God. How great was His longsuffering, pity and patience, and how ready to forgive was the Holy One! Who could understand this mystery? How could holiness and love in harmony dwell together in the divine heart? God hated sin with a holy hatred, impossible to the human heart. How could He then forgive their sin, and yet remain holy? What was the explanation of this righteous love, and yet loving righteousness? Moved to the depths of his being by these conflicting thoughts, he cries “I beseech Thee.” How pathetic, reverential and devout! His whole heart is in the words, as if his life depended on the answer. “I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.” He had secured a glimpse of God’s forgiving love. Was it any wonder that he should desire to know more of the pity, patience, and peace of his Father’s heart? Like a child he looks up to his Father’s face, and asks that He would explain to him the mystery of His love. He wanted a glimpse of the essential glory of God, but only that he might un-

derstand the nature of His purposes, and future dealings with Israel. He was anxious to learn the lesson God was so anxious to teach Elijah, near the same spot. He longed to be initiated into the mysteries of divine love, as manifested in God's long suffering and patience with sinful man. It was a desire to see the best in God, at its best; to behold the glory of His glory. It is as natural to find fault with the rushing river for seeking the sea, the flower for being fragrant and bending toward the sun, or a child for seeking the mother's embrace and leaning, when sick and sad, on her bosom of love, as to condemn the soul for exercising its most divine function when, like Moses, it cries "Show me Thy glory."

III. THIS REQUEST IS ROYAL.

What Moses desired was not only wise and good, but the best of which his best nature was capable. Therefore it was not only rational and religious, but in very truth royal. It did not spring from mere sentiment or selfish impulse, but from the sublime and sacred yearnings of the soul to approach its ideal. It was a noble ambition of a noble nature, finding expression in a most spiritual longing for a glimpse of God, which would increase its spirituality and strengthen it for self-sacrificing service.

Moses sought to secure a higher revelation of God, that he might be the better prepared to serve his generation. He longed for more spiritual insight into the spiritual nature of the Supreme, that his soul might be made more sensitive to the sense of sin, and more sympathetic with the sinner. His thought was not of himself, but of God's glory, and the good of God's people. He would approach nearer the Divine in spiritual affinity, that he might inspire the people with spiritual aspiration. His request was but the outpouring of a spirit moved to its depths with an earnestness that was terrible, to secure greater inspiration to fulfill its mission. It was simply the most spiritual struggle of a soul in its most spiritual season, for a vision of God that would strengthen it to secure supremacy over all selfishness. Moses was never more like God than when he sought the vision that would make him Godlike. He reached the highest altitude hitherto attained in his spiritual experience, when he uttered the impassioned appeal, "Show me Thy glory." As he surmised it, the form of the request was not spiritual, but the spirit it breathed was akin to divine. If the form was faulty, the faith and fervor were faultless. If, as some suggest, he even expected in some miraculous manner to be able to see the divine essence, and gaze with mortal eye upon

the personal face of Deity, even this does not lessen the spirituality of the prayer, or the value of the spirit that prompted it. What soul is so divine as to separate everything sensuous from its spiritual search and service, or is spiritual enough to rightly interpret its spiritual yearnings? We find that Philip, who had been privileged to breathe the spiritual atmosphere surrounding the Saviour, who had gazed on the most glorious and perfect manifestation of God possible, who had heard the most spiritual words that ever fell on human ears, and seen the most spiritual revelation of the moral nature of the Father in heaven, rises no higher than Moses in spiritual sensitiveness or conception of the spiritual God. The petition "Show us the Father" is identical with the royal request of Moses, "Show me Thy glory." They are both precisely the same, in root and branch. Philip has not advanced on Moses in spiritual aspiration, nor is he superior in spiritual interpretation of his soul's need. Indeed, after sitting at the Saviour's feet for eighteen centuries to learn of Him the secret of spiritual strength, men have scarcely risen to a higher plane of spiritual sensibility, and are but little less trammelled by the human tendencies and material influences to which flesh is heir. Man is strangely human in his divinest moods and most spiritual moments. If the de-

sire of Moses was crude in its manner of expression, it is perfect in its Godward movement. This desire of Moses is one of God's jewels, reflecting the light of Heaven in the soul it adorns. The rough setting of this diamond divine, all will note, while the spiritual eye alone will appreciate its royal radiance and heavenly hue. It is a glittering gem of grace, a jewel of the royal diadem. It is a flower from the Paradise of love, blossoming in God's garden of the soul, and reaching out in fragrance to its heavenly home. All that Moses hitherto had seen of God had been manifested in sensuous form—the cloudy pillar, the burning bush, the Shekinah symbol, these were his highest opportunities to know the spiritual nature of God. Who can rise higher in his conception than his knowledge warrants? God can not expect a man to be greater and nobler than the revelation he has received enables him to be. This request is royal, for in spiritual sensitiveness and sagacity it falls not one whit below the aggregate value of the glimpses of God given to Moses. If a man attain to the full moral stature made possible by his privileges, men and God can not but be satisfied with his life. The current of the religious life of Moses, ever full and strong, never rose higher in spiritual tide than when he exclaimed "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." It had

moved in a majestic stream, its volume gaining velocity with every obstacle it surmounted, until it became impatient of hindrances and limitations and sought the ocean of the Infinite. If we would estimate aright the character of Moses, we must measure him, not by what succeeding generations have attained, but by the breadth and depth of his life, as compared with the men of his century. To know Moses, we must measure him by the slaves he emancipated. Moreover, when we remember how few have risen above having their spiritual services marred by the material and physical elements, so much objected to in the prayer of Moses, we can not but confess that his request was royal, in spite of the crudity of its form. It is sadly true that the majority of Christians have yet to learn to think of the spiritual God, and worship Him in a purely spiritual way. Men look for their glimpses of God almost invariably in connection with churches or creeds, Bible or prayer book. While these are valuable aids, when properly used, in keeping God before the mind and concentrating the mind upon God, yet too often they are so unworthily and unspiritually employed as to successfully hide the spiritual God from our vision. How few there are in this enlightened age and privileged century that look for spiritual vision unaided by material forms!

We clothe our most spiritual ideas in material conceptions, oft mistaking the shadow for the substance, the form for the life, the means of grace for grace itself, and the things that tell concerning God for the essential spiritual glory of the Eternal. Many see the things of God and God is seen in many things. But oh how few see God—the spiritual Being—apart from all things. God grant that our souls may continually cry, “Show me Thy glory,” until we have seen the Father in Heaven, as revealed in the Son, and His glory has passed before us.

THE RESPONSE.

“And he said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And He said, Thou canst not see My face; for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by: And I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts: but My face shall not be seen.”—Exodus 33 : 19-23.

Such is God's royal response to the royal request, “Show me Thy glory.” The rational, religious and royal request of Moses is representative of the earnest desire of every devout soul for glimpses of God. The response of Jehovah is typical of the gracious manner in which He satisfies every sincere desire to see His glory. The response sanctions, satisfies and sanctifies the request. The request is the condition of the response, and the response is the crown of the request. The request is the response, in prophecy; the response is the request in

realization. Without the request, the response could not be; with the request, the response could not but be. Every God-given desire must meet with God-given gratification. The universal craving for knowledge of God is a universal testimony that glimpses of God are possible. A natural revelation is a promise of a supernatural revelation. Every glimpse of God secured through the aid of natural faculties, in the natural realm, is a prophecy that glimpses of God may be secured, through the exercise of spiritual faculties, in the spiritual realm. So that the intellectual and the ethical knowledge of God accessible to man is a promise that spiritual knowledge is possible. The response of God to Moses is a promise, pledge and proof not only that glimpses of God are possible and probable through supernatural manifestation, but that a spiritual vision of the spiritual God is divinely assured to every soul spiritual enough to seek it. It thus has a two-fold interest and value to all who are anxious to see God's glory. It is valuable as a manifestation of the manner in which God received and answered the prayer of His servant, and also because it reveals the gracious attitude He always maintains toward the seeking soul. It is of priceless value because it enables us to see the precious gems of grace with which God adorns the soul of His serv-

never-failing source of inspiration and ever-efficient guide to the desired haven. It contains a promise which crystallizes under our very gaze into a veritable vision. He who realizes his own need of a nearer approach to God, in order to qualify him for the efficient fulfillment of any arduous task, will not fail to appreciate the heaven-born message which this response contains, and the inspiration it breathes. He who reverently ponders over it will never fail, however distressed, despondent or despairing, to "renew his strength like the eagle" and to soar heavenward, leaving sorrow like clouds below and live only in the light of God's love. May our eye be sensitive to the spiritual light, our ear appreciative of the music of the divine voice, and our heart responsive to the life-giving touch of holiness, as we draw near to study these words of God, so like Him, full of the mystery of light, life and love, grace and glory.

The text naturally falls into three divisions. The first speaks of what God reserves to himself; the second, of the reason for this divine reservation, and the third, of what He is ready to reveal to man. The first teaches that only glimpses of God are possible; the second, that only glimpses of God are necessary, and the third, that glimpses of God are assured. Thus the response speaks of

I. RESERVATION IN REVELATION.

“ My face shall not be seen.” Such is the divine decree, from which there is no appeal. It expresses and emphasizes an eternal fact. The decree speaks of the unveiled, personal face of Jehovah, which Moses probably had wrongly surmised to be the vision which his soul craved when he exclaimed, “ I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.” He is assured that while God is ready to vouchsafe every manifestation necessary to qualify him for the highest service, that there must ever remain of the Divine an unrealized vision:—It is ever thus. A divine reservation is imperative to every divine revelation. God has ever to hide Himself in order to be seen. Without the hand that covered Moses in the cleft of the rock, and hid the effulgent light of the divine countenance from the gaze of his mortal eye, the vision granted to him would have been forever impossible. A revelation of God of necessity leaves in reserve more than it reveals, hides more than it manifests, and discloses only as it is successful in hiding. A vision is that which succeeds in veiling all else, that it might itself unveil. It is a natural law that the greater light has to be hid, before it is possible for the lesser light to be seen. The sun has to set before the stars are seen. The inherent

revealing force of every object is commensurate with its power all else to hide. Shade as well as sunlight is indispensable to sight. Excessive light means blindness. Is not this the explanation why God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable, clothes Himself with clouds and darkness? How suggestive that He who is Light should choose so often to manifest Himself in the form of a cloud. God's choice of the cloud for a chariot and covering is not caprice, but it is selected rather as a medium of communication because it is approved of divine wisdom. It was in a cloud He appeared on the mercy seat, and in a cloud He descended on Mount Sinai to speak with Moses. The cloud was not only necessary to the manifestation, but an integral part of the vision. It succeeded in manifesting God as it was successful in hiding Him. Even dark clouds become transfigured, transparent and translucent when in touch with God, and irradiated with light divine. Let no one complain of the cloud which contains God, or fear the cloud if God is in it. The cloud around God, like the shadow of the sun, brings life and light into the world. Light apart from darkness equals blindness; light in darkness equals vision. Excessive light renders vision as impossible as does excessive darkness. Unrestricted revelation means restricted and ruined vision.

There is a sense in which there is a reservation in every divine revelation, and a revelation in every divine reservation. God must ever reserve more than He reveals. There will ever be mysteries in the Divine which the human can never hope to solve, and depths which the finite can never hope to fathom. The Infinite must ever be mysterious. Were God less divine He would be less mysterious; but were He less mysterious He would be less divine. To eliminate mystery is to dim the light of divinity. The finite can not comprehend the Infinite, until the Infinite become finite. Though we know all possible to human nature of the Divine, we must ever feel that we possess but a glimpse of God, and the nearer we approach the more will the full vision seem to evade us. Ever on and on will the soul be impelled by heaven-born impulses, attracted by ineffable love and inspired by irrepres- sible instincts to seek to "know the Almighty unto perfection," but ever conscious that the distance traversed through countless ages is but a step of a journey that can know no end. What mortal eye can scan infinitude? What human heart can ever hope to hold the ocean of divine love? What plummet can sound divine depths? He who knows most of God will realize most how little he knows. The less we think we know, the more we actually know,

and the more we know the more will we strive to know. But when all that it is possible for us to know of the Father in Heaven is realized, it will only be a glimpse of God. Visions of inestimable value have been vouchsafed to man since the world began, but were they all gathered together and concentrated into one great revelation, though it contain everything that man has seen or felt of the Divine, and though it be enriched with the experience of the myriad mariners who have sailed on life's ocean, even then it would give us but a glimpse of God. The Bible contains a rich galaxy of gathered glimpses of God. It tells what the best men at their best have seen and heard of the Eternal. It is full of statements which show how men have received visions of the Infinite, and crowded with precious promises that greater visions will yet be granted. Men have prized the revelation it contains far above their lives, for it has brought the light of holiness and hope of Heaven, into the home and heart of humanity. But, after all, it contains but a glimpse of God's glory. Though all that men have gathered, gleaned and garnered from Nature's garden of glimpses of God, and though all the knowledge of Him ever given to man in natural and supernatural manifestations, as expressed in poetry, science, music, philosophy and theology, be

brought together in one strong ray of light and focused on the Being of God, though the effect be effulgent and blinding bright, it will give only a glimpse of God. Blend together the revelation of Nature and of grace, the word and the works of God; though its radiant light be so rich and royal, that angels are riveted to gaze upon it with eyes of wondering and adoring love, yea, though man is transfigured by its glory and his whole being, material, mental and moral irradiated by its light—after all it is but a glimpse of God. The world is what it is to-day in mind, morals, manners, and motives, because glimpses of God have been sought and secured. Yet our knowledge is but as a dewdrop to the mighty ocean, a ray of light to the meridian sun. We have but a fragmentary conception, a partial knowledge, a hurried view, a faint idea, an inkling—in a word, a “glimpse” of God. Still we thank God that glimpses are possible, yea, and that glimpses only are possible. For eternity, the glory of every glimpse will be a glimpse of God’s glory, yet the best of glimpses will be but glimpses at the best.

II. REASON FOR RESERVATION.

“Thou canst not see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live.” The motive by which God is ever prompted in reservation and revelation is

the happiness and the moral well-being of man. Love is the royal reason for all He reserves and all He reveals. He reserves and reveals that man might live. He ever refuses to grant every request which would not ensure the increased influence and happiness of the soul that conceived it. As God is love, and some human desires are impolitic, therefore their divine satisfaction is impossible. The soul may desire that which is rational, religious and royal, but may express its desire, and request satisfaction in a form that is wanting in all these qualities. God will ever satisfy such a desire, but ever refuse to grant such a request. He refused to grant the request of Moses in the form in which it was made, while He fully satisfied the spirit that prompted it. Indeed, He could have satisfied His own heart, and the heart of Moses, in no other way. The reservation in the revelation God made to Moses was imperative for the preservation of the life of His servant. Moses could not see the face of God and "live," and God desires to preserve and not to destroy life. He has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, how much less in the death of the saint. Divine wisdom declares reservation in revelation necessary; therefore divine love has made it imperative. What God reserved from Moses He withheld, not because the revelation thereof would

be so majestically terrible as to fill him with mortal dread, but because the highest manifestation of divine love in unveiled effulgence would so overwhelm him with a sense of his own unworthiness and of God's glory, as to slay him with excessive light. This would baffle the purposes of divine love, and the end the prophet was so anxious to reach. Therefore God said, "My face shall not be seen." What God reserved from Moses, He has reserved from all men. "No man hath seen the Father," and no man ever will, save in the Son. Were it otherwise, man would no longer be human or God Divine, for to see the personal face of God would unman man and undeify Deity. Moses, like many others, knew not what his words implied, but was deeply conscious of a craving which God could only satisfy, and which could be satisfied only with God. As ever God interpreted the desire, not the expression of it, and answered the spirit and not the words. He satisfied the soul of His servant, though He reserved to Himself what Moses thought to be necessary to his well-being. To satisfy the desire it was imperative to deny it, in the form in which it was presented. God promised to give to Moses not only what he desired but much more than he understood to be his need. That the Father in Heaven should deny to Moses the inalienable prerogative of

a child to look on his father's face seems, on the surface, harsh and arbitrary. But "there is reconciliation in the depths." He could not be a Father, and act otherwise. The reservation is the result not of any arbitrary enactment of God's sovereignty, but the unavoidable restriction of love, the outcome of His Fatherhood. If God revealed to man all that human curiosity craves to know, man's judgment would be dethroned, his will paralyzed and his happiness, yea, and life, destroyed. Man often desires to know what he is unprepared to learn, and seeks knowledge, the possession of which would prove detrimental to his highest interests. How prone is man to think, in his mental madness, that mysteries are misery-makers. He fain would believe that the panacea for all his woes is to know all that he desires to know, while in fact the elucidation of all mystery would be to man the consummation of all misery. God in mercy reserves to Himself what man is unprepared to know. In this, as in all else, human capacity alone sets the limit to divine generosity.

III. REVELATION IN RESERVE.

"I will make all My goodness pass before thee. . . I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand, while I pass by. And I will take away My hand, and thou shalt see My back parts."

In these words God promises to reward the spirit of His servant with the highest manifestation possible of His glory. While he is informed that there is a reservation of necessity in divine revelation, he is assured that God is ready to grant to him the greatest revelation that it is possible for man to receive. Thus does God satisfy and sanctify the sincere search of the soul for spiritual sight. Divine love never refuses to grant any request, without making ample recompense. God's reason for reserving to Himself that which would hinder and not help His servant in the attainment of holiness and happiness, lends mercy to the reservation and majesty to the revelation. This is the royal response of divine love to the request of Moses, as interpreted by divine wisdom. The revelation promised contains immeasurably more than Moses realized to be his need. God will vouchsafe to him the vision necessary to qualify him for the efficient fulfillment of his great mission, and will reveal as much of His glory as mortal eye can behold. This promised revelation is valuable not only because it gives us an insight into God's character, and throws light on the conditions of spiritual vision, but also as a prophecy that all who conform to the laws of spiritual investigation will be rewarded with glimpses of God. If any doubt existed in the heart of Moses

concerning the reception his request would receive, it must have been forever removed by the royal response which promised so glorious a revelation. It must ever be interesting and instructive to all who would secure visions of God, to consider the way in which it has pleased Him to reveal Himself. Indeed, this is of supreme importance, for man's redemption depends upon a revelation of God. Religion without revelation is impossible. He who has not learned how God speaks to man can not know, or seek to know, how man may and should speak to God. Man's conduct is governed by his conception of God. He becomes perfect as he perceives perfection in the Almighty. Insight into the divine character alone can inspire man to approach the divine ideal. The best in man can never be at its best until it has realized the best in God of which it is capable. Therefore inquiry into God's methods of revealing Himself is second only in importance to the revelation itself. The measure of our interest in every special manifestation of God is commensurate with the depth of our consciousness of our own need of a special vision. As our longing for the infinite is intensified, our interest is enhanced in all revelations promised and realized. This vision of God promised to Moses is a prophecy of the revelation with which the Father in Heaven will enrich

and ennoble the sincere search of every soul for glimpses of His glory. In response to the desire of Moses to see His glory, God promises that all His goodness shall pass before him. This suggests that His glory and His goodness are identical. Even to God His glory is His moral character. The glory of His glory is His goodness. As the Almighty conceives it, His glory consists not in His almighty power, infinite wisdom or eternal existence, but in the moral qualities of His personal character, -- righteousness and love. His glory does not depend on those perfections which are necessary to His being. He could not but be almighty, all-wise and eternal, and however valuable these attributes may be, they can not with any propriety be considered as constituting His personal and peculiar glory. Character in God, as in man, is that which is created of choice, and not of compulsion. That which is compulsory possesses no virtue, though in itself it contain much good. The good that one chooses is one's crown. God, in a special sense, is good and gracious because He chooses so to be, and this constitutes His glory. The glory of Deity is His personal character, and the glory of His personal character is goodness, or love. God always emphasizes mercy and love as the essence and crown of His divine perfection. Until man has had a glimpse of

the love of God, he intuitively feels that there is yet in Him a glory that he has never seen, and though glorious visions of His majesty and glory be ever granted to him, the spiritual instinct of the soul will still cry out, "Show me Thy glory." Seeing the spiritual God, the Father, alone can satisfy the spiritual nature of man. Moral quality alone can move and mould a moral agent. Love alone can irradiate a being with its own light, and make it lovable. Goodness alone can transform and make men good. The vision of God's love alone can satisfy the love-hungry soul. Though we possess all knowledge of the majesty of God, as expressed in the innumerable worlds around us, and though we be privileged to receive every other revelation possible of the Divine, save the vision of love, the hunger of our soul will be unappeased, the longing of our heart unsatisfied, and continually we will cry, "Show me Thy glory." It is only when the mind has grasped the truth that God is love and when the heart has learned to love like God, that the soul has seen the glory of God and is satisfied. God promises to proclaim His name before Moses, and this name is evidently an integral part of the revelation. Instinctively we ask what the name of God has to do with the vision. The answer is not far to seek. God's name is inseparably connected with His glory, for

it stands for His moral character. The Deity has many names. They are all holy and expressive of certain attributes of the divine character. The name spoken of here was evidently pronounced for the first time, in the hearing of Moses, or it could not have been a necessary part of the new revelation. What could it have been, but the name that identifies God with the work of salvation? The identical name which he earned for himself in redeeming man, alone would harmonize with the vision. Man's salvation is said to be "to the Lord for a name." What name worthy or more effectual in assisting Moses to understand the mysteries of divine love than the name so full of love, "the Lord, long suffering and gracious, plenteous in mercy and truth?" God is very jealous of this name, and He esteems it above every other. He pardons iniquity "for His name's sake," and one of the strongest pleas that man can make for mercy is "for Thy name's sake, pardon my iniquity." This name is spelled only in letters of love, and can be known and appreciated only as it is expressed in the work of salvation. Is not this the reason why God says, in introducing His name, "and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious?" The name becomes of practical value when the qualities it represents are manifested in deeds of mercy. A name is always valuable as it is appropriate, and

appropriate only as it helps to distinguish the quality for which it stands, from all else. The goodness of God expresses His name, and His name indicates His goodness. Every vision is valuable, not to the extent of the inherent glory it contains, but in proportion to its power of making that glory transferable to man. A vision is great, only as the soul is enabled to appreciate the glory it unveils. The love of God is as clearly seen in all the attending circumstances pertaining to the revelation promised to Moses, as in the act of granting the revelation itself. A vision is valuable only as we are in a position to perceive its glory. This is true of all visions. Without an attainable vantage ground, the most beautiful landscape would to us have no interest or charm. Until we stand in a favorable position, the most lifelike painting would have no beauty. It was thus with Moses. Without the cleft of the rock, and the covering hand of God, the vision, though in itself of inestimable value, would have had no practical influence on the soul. God, however, in mercy always provides these requisites of a right relationship to the revelation received. The cleft of the rock is always necessary, and ever within reach. The shadow of His hand is imperative to every vision, and it is ever ready to cover and to keep in safety the soul, when His goodness passes

before it. With what a sense of security and of the near approach of the Father in Heaven, God's hand filled the heart of Moses! It is ever thus. What hand so strong and tender, so fatherly, as the hand of God? Blessed is he whose habitation is under the shadow of the hand of the Almighty. When the soul has been made strong enough, through the nourishing care and protecting hand of God, to live in the light of His presence, the shadow of His hand will be removed, and His love in undimmed glory shall be seen. The cleft of the rock and the hiding hand are both necessary conditions of revelation. The cleft of the rock; while closing from his view everything on the right and the left, focused his eye on God as He passed before him. It was necessary not only that Nature should disappear from the vision before the personal God would become visible, but that Nature should turn all her lights to reflect on the passing glory. The soul that would see the spiritual God must become conscious only of that which is spiritual. The cleft of the rock can not but suggest the Rock of Ages, cleft on Calvary, in which all sinners may hide, and may in safety gaze upon God's glory. In the cleft of the Rock of Ages, the particular vision given to Moses is made possible to all, and all that hide therein are privileged to behold, not the passing but the abiding

glory of God. The climax of God's promise to Moses, the kernel of the response and the soul of the revelation, is that Moses would be privileged to see God's "back parts." These words may be translated, "Thou shalt see Me as revealed in the latter days." What can this mean, save that God was about to reveal Himself to Moses, as He would be seen in Emmanuel redeeming the world. No interpretation is more natural to the spirit of the whole narrative. God's love could be satisfied with nothing less; the soul of Moses could desire nothing more. This we believe to be the revelation which God informed Moses He held in reserve for him—the highest manifestation possible to mortal eye of the spiritual God, as seen in Christ, the Redeemer. Moses is about to see "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," to taste of the joy of salvation, and to look upon "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

THE REALIZATION.

Be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto Mount Sinai, and present thyself there to Me in the top of the mount. And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount: neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount. And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."—Exodus 34: 2-7.

Thus are glimpses of God realized and such are the realized glimpses of God. Such is the vision of the spiritual God, and such is the God of the spiritual vision. In these words we are permitted to draw near the heart of Jehovah, to enter into the

Holy of Holies of His character, and to gaze upon His glory. All who would appreciate the revelation of God made to Moses, and make the vision their own, must ascend the mount made holy by the divine presence, with reverential awe, and seek to enter the sacred solitude and silence of Sinai, not in a sensuous, selfish or sentimental spirit, but in sanctity of soul and with a spirit sensitive to things spiritual. To behold the glory of God we must needs stand with Moses in the cleft of the rock, having fulfilled the conditions of spiritual sight, and with sanguine spirit await the realization of the promised vision. Our souls must burn within us with godly enthusiasm, and our hearts be so filled with spiritual yearning that we will hail the vision with holy love. These words emphasize the co-operation necessary between the human and the Divine, to make possible the realization of divine revelation. They enumerate the conditions imperative to spiritual vision. They teach us three things concerning the realization of glimpses of God. First, the character of the recipient; second, the conditions of the reception; third, the nature of the received glimpses. Thus, in the light of Heaven, they reveal to us:

I. THE RECIPIENT.

The spirit of Moses is representative of the spirit

which is imperative to spiritual sight. He was privileged to see God only as it is possible for all men to see Him. God is ever the same, and His relation the same to all who diligently seek Him. While glimpses of God are possible to all, they are possible only under certain unchanging conditions. A certain spirit and attitude of soul are imperative to spiritual vision. The qualification of Moses to receive glimpses of God was amply tested by the conditions imposed upon him, and in the fulfillment of the divine requirements his soul was fully prepared to receive the revelation of God. He possessed the spirit without which it is impossible to see God, and in the possession of which it is impossible not to see God. Thus, indirectly, the text emphasizes the conditions of spiritual sight.

The first condition of spiritual sight is—

(a) *Sincerity.* No one will fail to note the sincerity of spirit which Moses manifested in every stage of his search for the spiritual God. Sincerity marks his every step and characterizes his every effort. Sincerity blossoms in every desire and ripens in every deed. Sincerity was the secret of his search and the secret of his success. It was because he was sincere that he sought, and secured, this supreme vision. His whole soul was in the search, for it was the search of his soul. This is sincerity. He lived

only to see God, and saw God only to live like God. No one will succeed in seeing God in any other way. The mind that is not honest, the spirit that is not upright, and the soul that is not sincere, can not possibly see the spiritual God. Unless we possess a pure heart and a pure life and are in truth what we appear to be, pure, real, true—in a word, sincere—we can not hope to secure glimpses of God. This is as wise as it is good. The insincere soul is incapable of appreciating spiritual things; it only trifles with truth. He that is insincere is unfaithful to the light he already possesses, the truth already revealed, and thus is unqualified to appreciate the visions of God and glimpses of His glory. Divine revelation can only be made as the human is prepared to receive it. God can not make Himself known, save to the soul that with sincerity seeks a worthier conception of Him. Glimpses of God, like all gifts of grace, are denied only to those who are destitute of the power to utilize them. Sincerity is the first fruit of faith, and the first and final condition of fellowship. Sincerity is alone the soil which can nourish worthy aspiration after God. Spiritual aspiration is but the sincere search of the soul for a more perfect knowledge, a closer communion and a greater affinity of spirit with the Divine. The soul that would see the Supreme must

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seek to do so with a single eye. As the marksman closes one eye in order to concentrate the gaze of the other, the better to take aim, and the astronomer looks with single eye through the lenses of the telescope, so must he who would look far and well into the hidden things of God, to behold His eternal glory. The sincere soul alone will succeed in securing glimpses of God.

The second condition of spiritual sight is—

(b) *Spirituality*. This means sympathy of soul with God and things spiritual. There must be affinity between perceiver and perceived in all worlds. Like alone can know like. Spiritual things are spiritually seen. "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Without holiness no one can see Him who is Holy. Purity of heart or spirituality of mind is not only a condition but a qualification without which spiritual sight is impossible. The soul must exercise its spiritual function, before we can appreciate spiritual things or see the spiritual God. This is no arbitrary arrangement but the imperative law of divine love. The spiritual man alone can discern spiritual things. He who is not spiritually minded, though he be an intellectual genius, will utterly fail to understand spiritual things, because totally desti-

tute of the necessary qualification to receive them. Glimpses of God are given only to the Godlike. He who would succeed in making special discoveries in the spiritual world must ever conform to this essential condition of spiritual sight. We would not underestimate mental endowments or overestimate, were that possible, spiritual faculties. Deep spiritual natures alone can rise to a worthy conception of the "high and lofty One who inhabiteth Eternity." Nevertheless, the man whose mental nature is highly developed and mind well equipped, if spiritual, will understand more of God, get into closer touch with the Divine, be of greater service to humanity than is possible to an unlettered man, though possessing an equally devout and spiritual soul. He will secure greater glimpses of God and reveal more of God to his fellows, than is possible to the man who is his inferior intellectually. On the other hand, he who can not write his name, but has been born of the spirit of God, and is in sympathy, through love, with the purposes of His holy heart, will learn more of the secrets of divine love, receive and reproduce greater glimpses of God, than can the most learned philosopher destitute of spiritual affinity. How natural is this divine arrangement, and how merciful and good it shows God to be! Glimpses of God are possible to all, hence all

may excel in Godliness. The illiterate may be illuminated with the light divine, and become the most illustrious sons of God. The same law is reiterated in the world of Nature. The man that is in sympathy with Nature alone will succeed in learning her secrets. He that loves, alone can woo Nature until she loves and confesses in sweet confidence her affection. He must approach her clothed with the irresistible grace and charm of love before she will unseal her lips to speak the secrets of her happy heart. Nature has but one imperative demand of all her children—love. The poet may be ignorant of science and yet be admitted without question into the holy of holies of Nature's heart. If he possesses the true poetic instinct, he will never fail to charm the world with his interpretation of Nature. He will look on the beautiful lily and catch a glimpse of the God who made it. As he gazes on the sun, he will see the vigil eye of God. The true poet and the true painter, like the true Christian, will everywhere see God, and everywhere assist men to behold His glory. The artist alone can appreciate and interpret art; the poet alone can appreciate and interpret poetry, and the Godlike alone can see God. The spiritually minded will secure most, appreciate most, manifest most, glimpses of God. It is noteworthy that by far the

greatest discoveries in all worlds have been made by men great in heart, rather than head power. God is love. In love has He done all things, and love only can understand and appreciate love. Love only can see love, and love sees love only. Who but a friend can a friend fathom? None but the spiritual can see the spiritual God.

The third condition of spiritual sight is—

(c) *Service.* The last and most imperative qualification to secure glimpses of God is that condition of soul, that activity of spirit and sacrificing love which we designate service. It includes sincerity, spirituality and self-surrender. The first stands for spiritual ambition, the second for spiritual affinity and the third for spiritual assimilation. These three conditions of spiritual sight represent the Christian graces. The first is hope, the second faith, and the third love, “and the greatest of these is love.” Blended together, they constitute the essence of spiritual life, which is but another name for love in service and the service of love. This word stands for everything that is essential to secure glimpses of God. He who loves to serve God will learn of God how best to serve Him. Knowledge of God is the best preparation for service. The one Biblical word which includes everything essential to eternal life is Love, and love is

but soul in service. The words, "If any man will do His will, he shall know the doctrine," teach us that obedience is an imperative condition of spiritual sight. Indeed, it is the most important of all conditions, for without obedience to the truth already revealed, man is not prepared to receive a revelation of a greater truth. He only successfully studies Nature who is in sympathy with her spirit and in loving obedience conforms to her ways. He that would secure glimpses of God must appreciate those already received by reproducing them in his life. This is obedience, for what is obedience but sympathetic and sacrificing service? No one can serve God unless he loves Him. No one loves God unless he serves Him, and no one loves and serves without being constantly made more like unto God. Through service alone are we qualified for higher service. He that would know God must love Him, for God is love. Higher knowledge of God must be sought through increased sympathy expressed in more faithful, loving and efficient service. There is only one royal road to the holy of holies of God's heart, and that is the way the Saviour went,—obedience, expressed in self-sacrificing service. He that would know God must learn to look with the eye of God, think with the mind of God, act with the will of God, judge with the conscience of God, and love

with the heart of God. In a word he must co-work with God. The best way to know God is to serve Him. Had not Moses been faithful in the fulfillment of the task allotted to him, had he not shown the spirit of self-sacrifice and made serving God the great sacred aim of his life, he would never have been qualified to receive this vision of God. Moreover, had he sought it from any other motive or for any other purpose save to qualify him for more efficient service, it would never have been granted unto him. God reveals Himself that man might the better serve humanity and Heaven. God never honors selfishness with spiritual sight. Selfishness, like sensuality, blinds the spiritual eye and closes the heart of God like a sealed book. He that would know God must seek to know Him not from any idle curiosity or simply for personal satisfaction, but because the knowledge is imperative to enable him as a man to do his duty. He that would secure glimpses of God must seek them not only from the right motive, but in the right manner. The spirit must be humble, lowly, teachable. Without humility no one can approach Him who is Holy. God can not reveal Himself to the man who has no eye to see or heart to feel anything but self. He that is filled with thoughts concerning himself has no room for God in his soul. Haughti-

ness and holiness can not hope to dwell together in harmony. The Saviour emphasized the importance of possessing the childlike spirit, the teachable disposition, if we would become Godlike. Moses possessed pre-eminently these essential qualifications for spiritual vision. His sincerity, spirituality and service made him honored of men and beloved of God. This is the reason why he was rewarded with this special vision and glorified with this glimpse of God. This is the explanation why God spake to Moses "as a man speaketh with his friend." He was humble of heart, appreciative of spirit and faithful in service. His heart was united with the heart of God in the bonds of love, and his spirit, ever strong in sympathy with the Supreme, was strengthened through service. All who would secure the glimpses of God with which the life of Moses was enriched and ennobled must seek them with similar spirit, along the straight road of sincerity, the upward path of spirituality, and rough road of self-sacrificing service.

II. THE RECEPTION.

The words of the text inform us not only of the spirit necessary to receive glimpses of God, but of the manner in which glimpses are received. They give in detail the conditions of time and place in

which Moses received this vision. It is of great importance not only to know who may receive glimpses of God, but how, when, and where, it is possible to receive them. Manifold are the environments and many the seasons in which men have been permitted to see the glory of God. It is suggestive that the three greatest visions granted to Moses were given on the mount—one before he commenced his life work, to call and consecrate him for service; the second in the midst of life's duties, to encourage and to strengthen him in the fulfillment thereof; the last at the close of his memorable and majestic career, a reward and crown for faithfulness and a preparation for Heaven. There are but few places in which we would more naturally expect visions than on a mount,—Nature's nearest physical proximity to Heaven. The mount is the sanctuary of seclusion and solitude, the throne of Nature, before which the earth doth homage. All the world looks up to it with adoring eyes, and every star in Heaven seems to center its gaze upon it. Its foundation is the rock, and its canopy the star-studded sky. The mount represents everything that is majestic, lofty and transcendent in Nature. It lives above the clouds and the petty dissensions and strifes of meaner elements, drinking in the light that floods the sky, and lifts up its head

as if its royal ambition was to touch Heaven. It is the home of freedom, untrammelled by the conventionalities of life's commonplace conditions. From its summit the widest outlook of earth and Heaven is possible, and there the soul can in sacred solitude and silence scan sublime space, and soar past stars and suns to the sanctuary of spirit where the spiritual God is seen and served. We are not surprised that Jesus was so wont to retire to the mount to pray. What place so conducive to contemplative thought and communion. He that is not filled with a reverential spirit on a mount, would not worship in Heaven. Moses was transfigured on a mount; Elijah learned his greatest lesson of God on a mount; Jesus was transfigured on a mount. He who is anxious to secure a glimpse of God will do well to seek it on a mount—alone with God. That God chose the mount as the place in which to reveal Himself to Moses is significant and suggestive. He has a reason for all the selections He makes, whether of spirit, seasons or scenes, and the greatest reason is superior adaptability. He specifies to Moses the time, the place, and all the necessary preparation; he is to be ready in the morning and to present himself on Mount Sinai. No man is to go with him, neither is any man to be seen throughout all the mount, nor the flocks nor herds to feed before it.

Moses had to ascend toward Heaven to meet God, and God descended toward earth to meet Moses. The glory of man is that he can go up; the glory of God is that He can come down. Had Moses failed to observe any of the conditions given, he would never have realized the desired vision of God. But he was too much in earnest and too anxious to receive the promised revelation, to omit the fulfillment of any condition, to question or to fail to obey the divine decree in every detail. He manifested his faith in the act of hewing the two stones and taking them with him to the mount. God might easily have furnished them by the simple act of His sovereign will, but here was an opportunity to test and develop the faith of Moses, while also giving him the privilege of co-operating with God. He had to arise early and climb to the top of Mount Sinai; this meant individual effort and personal sacrifice, and thus proved his preparation to receive the promised vision. Moses rose up early, and bearing with him the stones, ascended with grateful heart and expectant spirit to the top of the mount and presented himself before the Lord, having faithfully observed all the conditions laid down for him. Therefore, God rewarded him with special glimpses of His glory. The spirit underlying these conditions is imperative to spiritual vision, though the form may

and does often vary. We must ever have faith in God and prepare ourselves to receive impressions from the Divine. We must ascend heavenward, leaving behind the din and noise of the world, and above clouds in the undimmed sunlight, with sweet confidence and strong faith, hold hallowed communion with God. He that is not prepared to sacrifice pleasure, time and ease, and to make all things subservient to the realization of glimpses of God, will never see the glory of God pass before him. Man's greatest glimpses of God have been secured in solitude. Special visions are given only to those in special need of them; special need moves the soul to its depths, and when so moved the soul instinctively seeks solitude. Strong souls seek solitude. This is not strange; it is their native home. Sublime spirits are born in solitude. He that is anxious to secure a worthier conception of the Eternal will seek to be alone in order to commune with God. The soul that would know God must learn to know itself, and the soul that would know itself retrospectively, introspectively, and prospectively, must seek solitude. As there are sorrows too sacred for speech, so there are spiritual experiences when man instinctively seeks solitude and becomes intolerant of every presence save the Divine. Under no other conditions are glimpses possible. When

the soul is enraptured with things divine, and filled with holy enthusiasm born of the consciousness of contact with God, and so absorbed in hallowed communion with Him that it becomes unconscious of its physical surroundings and lives only to know and love the Father in Heaven, then and then only does it behold the glory of God. This is possible in all environments, whether on the mount or in the valley, in the sunlight of pleasure or the shadow of pain. God is not limited to time nor place, and although the mount has been made sacred as the place where God has so often revealed Himself, yet we rejoice to know that in other scenes and less favored spheres the voice of God has been heard and His glory revealed. Ezekiel had visions of God among the captives by the river Chebar. The heavens were opened to John in the solitude of Patmos. Hence, glimpses of God are possible in very unpromising environments. Even when suffering humiliation in the land of captivity and surrounded by an idolatrous nation, men have received visions of God. We are not surprised when they are given on the mount, or in the promised land, in the enjoyment of freedom, surrounded by religious influences and privileges, where the very air seems heavy laden with God's precious promises. It is quite natural to expect them by the river Jordan, the

scene of so many of God's mighty works, or in the temple where His glory appeared on the mercy seat. But in Patmos and by the river Chebar! This startles and surprises the soul, and is a mystery ever. Nevertheless, it is a truth that circumstances nor country, nor crimes of comrades, need hinder the soul that seeks, from securing glimpses of God. It is of supreme importance that we remember the circumstances under which this special vision of God was vouchsafed to Moses. It was when his soul was bowed down in sorrow, when he was assailed by spiritual despondency and driven by the idolatry of the people to the verge of despair. Spiritual sorrow is ever rewarded with increased spiritual strength. Special visions of God are given to secure special victories over spiritual difficulties. It is strangely true that glimpses of God are more frequently secured in sorrow, sadness and suffering, than in any other seasons. When the night is dark and dreary, when spiritual despondency and despair harass the soul, when failure follows our footsteps and our fond hopes droop and die in a single night, when sickness assails the body and dark doubt beclouds the mind, and evil days come upon us; when there is no solitary star of hope in our spiritual sky, every light in Heaven having burned out like a candle in the socket,—amidst such experiences as

these do men rise to holier conceptions of God. This is a strange fact, but though strange, true, and written not only on the leaves of history but indelibly inscribed on the scroll of many a soul. Great sorrows drive great souls closer to God. Job struggled until he saw God when Satan sought to destroy his soul, and everything seemed to suggest that he was God-deserted. The three young men in Babylon had glimpses of God in the light of the fiery furnace. Stephen saw the heavens open and had a transfiguring vision of God while suffering martyrdom. Paul had visions when persecuted and in prison. Martyrs had glimpses of God's glory in the light of the fagot flame, when borne in a chariot of fire to Heaven. Think not then, my brother, that it is necessary to live in peace and prosperity or to reach high altitudes of favor, fortune or fame to secure glimpses of God. Nay, they may be secured when the soul is bowed down by sorrow, held in the iron grip of grief, and when everything in the outward environments defies the eye to see the God of love. Seek not to be delivered from the night experiences of sorrow, or from the path of self-denial and sacrifice in order to secure visions of God, but know rather that when in the way of duty, though suffering humiliation in the land of captivity or surrounded by sin near Sinai, outside the pale of the

promised land, then art thou most assured of a glimpse of God. May we ever remember that the sufferings of the soul, like the sorrows of a child, speed its flight to the Father's embrace. Sorrow and suffering, when sanctified by sweet submission of spirit, issue into seasons of spiritual serenity and satisfaction, the soul of which is that the spiritual God is seen.

III. THE RECEIVED GLIMPSES.

The soul of all study is the study of God as seen by the soul. The soul that will secure the greatest glimpses of God is the soul that knows best how to value glimpses already received, whether by itself or by others. The secret of superior glimpses is soul-appreciation of glimpses already secured. Nothing, therefore, is of more vital interest and importance to all who would know God than to acquaint themselves with what men have learned concerning Him. Our interest in the glimpses of God realized by others is commensurate with our individual yearning for a worthier conception of God. The value of every life is determined by the light it throws on the character of God. Men are immortal to the extent that they have been illuminated and irradiated with the light of divine love. Their influence is imperishable and their glory luminous, as their souls illuminate

the pathway to the heart of God. The secret of the spirituality and strength of any soul is its power to make stepping-stones of the spiritual experiences of others, to rise to a higher conception of God. Hence our interest in the vision of God vouchsafed to Moses. The value of the vision is the glory it unveils. Our interest in every vision is proportionate to the insight it gives into the character of God. As every truth holds a manward and a Godward relation, so every vision of God possesses a human and a divine element. Glimpses of God, like all the gifts of grace, bring earth and Heaven together, and blend the human with the Divine. We have already considered the human element; now we approach the divine. As ever, the divine lends value to the human, and the received glimpse of God is the soul of our interest in the recipient and the reception. What is of vital importance is that we see God as He was seen of Moses, when His glory passed before him. The glory of God is the harmony of holiness, as music is the harmony of sounds, beauty the harmony of color, and love the harmony of hearts. As it passed before Moses it was beauty to his eye, music to his ear, and love to his heart. God's glory is His goodness; His goodness was manifested to Moses, for it passed before him; but the goodness of God being a moral quality is of necessity invisible to

mortal eye, save as expressed in works or embodied in a person at once both human and divine. To embody infinite goodness, that person must needs be divine; to reveal it to man, He must needs be human. How, then, could Moses see "the goodness of God," apart from His works, save in Jesus Christ? He could not look upon the face of God to see His glory; he could not see His glory without looking on the face of Jesus Christ. If divine love declared it impossible to look on the face of God to behold His glory, divine love made it possible to see God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ. We can not but believe that the vision vouchsafed to Moses was a manifestation of the Incarnate Son of God and a prophetic view of His salvation. What more natural than that the legislator through whom the law was being given should catch a glimpse of the Messiah, through whom grace and truth would come? This alone could have satisfied the desire of Moses. What he really wanted in his heart of hearts, whether he knew it or not, was to see Jesus, who alone is the supreme revelation of God's glory. Does not God promise this when He says, "Thou shalt see My back parts?" What can these words mean if not this: Thou shalt see Me as I will manifest Myself in mercy to man in the latter days? It is certain that the phrase will bear this translation,

and hardly less certain is it that the spirit will bear this interpretation. God could not be seen "as in the latter days" save in Emmanuel, in whom dwelt bodily the glory of God. The possibility of such a revelation is unquestionable. Moses saw "Christ's day, and was glad." Why not believe that it was from Sinai he saw it? Granted the necessity of this revelation to qualify Moses for the special work entrusted to him of God, in preparing a peculiar people to receive the Messiah, and everything else is granted. If the Incarnation of Christ is a fact, it is to God an eternal fact, and to Him the manifestation of Jesus to Moses presented no more difficulty than His manifestation to Saul after His ascension. We can not interpret the request of Moses and the response of God without feeling that neither could be fully realized, save in the manifestation of the Redeemer. If we say that what Moses wanted when he asked to see the glory of God was to understand how holiness and love could dwell together in harmony, his desire could not be fulfilled save in a vision of Jesus Christ. In Him alone is found the explanation, for in Him holiness and love dwell in sweet accord, and mercy and truth are seen in close embrace. If what Moses wanted was a manifestation of God's purposes and future dealing with Israel, surely no revelation could be satisfactory or com-

plete which left out the soul of all His dealings—Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the glory of all God's dealings with man, for what is the glory of God save holiness triumphant in forgiving love, righteousness and mercy kissing each other? This is visible only in the Saviour. Jesus is the realization and the consummation of righteous and redeeming love. A glimpse of Emmanuel was all that Moses could desire, but nothing less could have satisfied his heart or qualified him for his service. Moreover, the names or attributes emphasized in the vision made to Moses are without meaning only as they find expression and interpretation in Christ. "Merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." This revelation is unintelligible, save in Christ Jesus. "Mercy" means a heart for misery. It points to the passibility of God, and teaches how He is capable of sympathizing with the sinner in his suffering. This is the initial step in man's salvation. He is "gracious"—His heart goeth out in saving love toward the sinner. "Longsuffering"—patient with the impenitent; "abundant in goodness and truth"—though infinite, yet too full of love to contain it. "Keeping mercy for thousands"—making a safe investment of mercy until the soul is driven by poverty to

claim it. "Forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin"—the sacrifice of the Sinless for the sinful. How is this revelation possible only in Christ? It is in Him that the heart of God is seen going forth in sacrificing sympathy to the sinner. In Him is seen the patient longsuffering of God. In Him the overflowing love of God is manifested. In Him alone is forgiveness possible and mercy reserved for men. Surely this revelation was a glimpse of Gospel salvation, and a glimpse of salvation means a glimpse of the Saviour of the world. The greatest manifestation of the glory of God to the world is Jesus Christ, and well might this have satisfied the soul of Moses and brought him to his knees. Well might he have been transfigured by the vision, and his whole being become irradiated with its divine glory. Nothing could have so prepared him to elevate, educate and emancipate Israel as to see Immanuel, God's ideal man and man's ideal God. The soul can find supreme satisfaction only in the Saviour. What all souls long for, consciously or unconsciously, is to see the God of love, and to realize that in truth He is the Father in Heaven. This is the highest conception of God possible to the soul, as it is the heart's deepest yearning. The Father is seen only in the Son, and he that hath seen the Son only has seen the Father. He that hath

seen the Son has learned that "God is love." He understands how God can love and is moved to love like God, for His goodness has passed before him. Moses was moved by love when he requested God to show him His glory. God was moved by love when He responded to the request, and in a unique manner, He in love passed before him until Moses was moved by love. When Moses saw Jesus he became nobler, wiser and holier. He returned from the mount of vision prepared for his life's work, more in sympathy with his people, a better leader, a wiser ruler, for he had seen the ideal Ruler and Redeemer—the Prince of Peace.

THE RESULT.

“ And Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped. And he said, If now I have found grace in Thy sight, oh Lord, let my Lord I pray Thee, go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, And take us for Thine inheritance. And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words. For after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights. He did neither eat bread nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. And it came to pass when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come nigh him. And Moses called unto them and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai.”—EXODUS 34: 8, 9, 27-32.

The result of glimpses of God is transfiguration.

Transfiguration is the irradiation of the human by divine love, as the result of the illumination of the human by divine light. To see God is to become Godlike. To know God is to love Him, and to love Him is to become like Him. The spirituality of any soul depends upon its insight into the spiritual nature of God. The strength of any soul in service is determined by the strength of its spiritual sight. The spiritual life deepens as the spiritual outlook widens. The higher the soul rises in its conception of God, the deeper becomes its sensibility to things spiritual. Vision ends in adoration; adoration ends in assimilation; assimilation ends in reproduction. This is Godliness. Godliness is Godlikeness, and Godlikeness is the result of adoringly gazing on God's glory. The soul that secures the greatest vision of God becomes most like the God of the vision. The vision mirrors the transfigured soul; the transfigured soul mirrors the God of the vision. In the vision, love unveils divine life; in the transfiguration, life unveils divine love. The vision is life in the language of love; the transfiguration is love in the language of life. He who beholds the glory of God is transformed to His very image. Glimpses of God illuminate and irradiate man's whole being, until he becomes Godlike. All glimpses of God have a transforming influence, but the greater the

vision the greater its transfiguring power. Our vision of God determines our conception of Him, and our conception of God determines our character before God. Our character always conforms to our conception of God and it can never rise higher. Conception of God is character in promise; character is conception of God in crystallization. Man worships the God of his conception, and becomes like the God he worships. He reverences God as his conception rises; and he reproduces God in proportion as he reverences. Glimpses of God generate reverence in the soul. The soul retains what it reverences, ruminates on what it retains, and reproduces that on which it ruminates. Moses received a glimpse of God which increased his reverence, and as a pearl of great price it was treasured in his heart and retained in his memory. Reverently he reflected and ruminated on the vision he had received, until its glory became an integral part of his being and was reproduced in his life. This is the secret of his transfiguration. It is ever thus. The soul that receives a vision of God will reverence the God of the vision, retain and ruminate on the vision, and will invariably reproduce and reflect its glory. These are the stages in man's transfiguration, and the results of glimpses of God—reverence, retention, rumination and reproduction.

I. REVERENCE.

“And Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.”

Thus humility hastens to do homage to holiness. Humility loves holiness and holiness loves humility. One attracts the other, and where both meet, there is Heaven. Humility honors holiness in doing it homage; holiness honors humility in receiving its homage. Holiness produces humility, and humility promotes holiness. Humility is the condition of holiness in man, and holiness the crown of humility. He who gazes on the glory of God instinctively bows his head and worships. He does not droop as doth the fading flower, but bends rather like the full and ripened ear of corn under its very weight of glory, having profited by the light and warmth of Heaven until made ready for sacrifice and service. It is on his knees alone man can enter into the holy of holies of the temple of truth, and invariably he who has so entered and seen the glory of God on the mercyseat will return with increased humility of heart, lowliness of spirit and contrition of soul. Glimpses of God's glory can not fail to impress the soul privileged to receive them with a sense of its own utter unworthiness. The longer we gaze upon the sun of righteousness, live in its light and

treasure its beams, the more oppressive will become the consciousness of our own moral darkness. The further we are permitted to wander into the temple of holiness, the deeper will become our hatred of all that is unholy. The 'nearer we are permitted to draw to the heart of God, and the more we learn to appreciate the depth of divine love, the more will we realize the shallowness of our own lives and the selfishness of our own love. This will bring us to our knees, not only to adore, but in intense earnestness of spirit to seek to be transformed to God's glorious image. This is reverence. Sin becomes hideous in the light of holiness; selfishness dies in the presence of divine love. We learn to love as we learn how God loves. He who has seen the glory of God—Jesus Christ—has learned to look with the eye of God on self, on sin, and on society. He hates iniquity with the hatred of God's holy heart, and is filled with contrition when the light of holiness reveals the stains of sin on his soul. Moses learned his lesson of forgiving love when permitted with prophetic eye to gaze on God's incarnate love in Jesus Christ. It is ever thus. No miracle, however mighty, or manifestation, however majestic, will so move the soul to realize its best in life and love, as the matchless miracle of mercy—Jesus Christ. To see Jesus, the glory of God, is to be-

come like Him, full of God's glory. No surer sign of having secured glimpses of God is possible than the possession of the Christlike spirit, and no surer sign is possible that we possess the spirit of the Son of God than that, like Him, we constantly seek communion with the Father. This spirit Moses possessed; he "bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped." Holiness invariably fills the soul with humility, and humility uplifts the soul to hold hallowed communion with the High and Holy One. The soul finds its supreme satisfaction in seasons of spiritual vision, in the worship of the spiritual God. This is the object, not only of every vision of God vouchsafed to man, but of everything that divine love has undertaken in man's behalf. To enable the human life to blend with the divine in the harmony of holiness, is the high aim of holy love. Communion between God and man is the realization of the highest purposes of the Divine and the satisfaction of the deepest yearning of the human. Heaven itself can contain no choicer crown for the Christian than to be privileged to gaze upon the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and through constant communion to be changed and conformed to His very image. Only the soul that has seen the glory of God knows how to appreciate the privilege of drawing near to God in prayer. Nothing so in-

spires man with the enthusiasm of holiness for communion with the Father in Heaven as to behold the Lord's Christ. The soul that has not seen the glory of God is not capable of the highest communion, and he who knows not what it is to pray is a stranger to the most Christlike passion and Godlike peace. The secret of salvation is absolute conformity, through communion, with Jesus Christ. Salvation apart from conformity, or conformity apart from communion, is impossible. To see Christ is to see the Father, and to see the Father only can satisfy the soul. A passion for prayer is a preparation for, and a promise of, visions of God. Without prayer no glimpse of God is possible; with prayer every vision of God is possible. As Moses understood the spiritual nature of God, his faith and his love increased. His confidence deepened as his conception widened, and the better he understood the character of God, the readier was he to trust his own life and the life of his people to His care. Is not this the meaning of the words which fell from his lips, "Let my Lord, I pray Thee, come among us and pardon our iniquity and sin, and take us for Thine inheritance?" He had already told the Lord that he loved these people far better than his life, and now he can desire nothing better for himself or them than to be made the subjects of the grand and glorious

salvation which he had been permitted to see. Moses could pay no greater compliment than this to divine love. The only way to appreciate the Saviour is to accept His salvation. To realize and recognize that through God alone is redemption possible, and to receive the Redeemer with true gladness of heart, is all that God requires and all that man can do. When we realize that God is love, and learn how God can love, we have seen His glory. When the mother who would gladly sacrifice her own life to preserve her child has so learned to appreciate the love of God that she can look up into His face and say, "Into Thy hands, O Father of love, I commit my child, knowing well that Thy love will last where mine may grow cold," the goodness of God has surely passed before her.

II. RETENTION.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words."

The command to write, although expressly given in connection with the divine precepts delivered to Moses, is pertinent to the vision, for it emphasizes a duty which all who have received glimpses of God have ever been glad to obey. Moses realized that the principle underlying the command was to be honored in connection with the vision. Therefore he wrote not only all the words that God to him had

spoken, but everything that words could tell of the glory he had seen. Every soul that has received a vision of God instinctively seeks to retain its influence and reproduce its glory. Indeed, no result more naturally follows the reception of glimpses of God than the desire to retain and to reproduce. Without an appreciative spirit, glimpses of God would be impossible; possessing this spirit, retention is imperative. He that has seen the divine glory, heard the divine voice and felt the divine power, will treasure these privileges more than life and love them as the soul's richest heritage. Glimpses of God are never forgotten; their influence will last as long as life. Memory gladly retains what the soul reverences. The glory of memory is that it ever retains glimpses of God's glory. To perpetuate impressions and influences produced by visions of God is memory's most sacred service to the soul. As the priests in the tabernacle of old kept the lamps ever burning, and the people ever reminded of the abiding presence of God's glory on the mercy-seat, so memory, like a priest in the temple of the soul, keeps the soul ever illuminated with the light received from the vision of God's glory. Glimpses of God are the most honored paintings which hang on memory's walls. What man has seen of God is indelibly written in letters of love on his soul. He

who has heard the divine voice reverently retains the message it breathes. Every revelation of God given to man in time has an eternal significance, and though of pre-eminent individual importance is, nevertheless, of universal interest. It is therefore imperative that we retain, so that we may reproduce the vision of God vouchsafed to us. God's interpretation of the mystery of divine love will ever remain the soul's most sacred trust. Glimpses of God leave a lasting impression upon the soul. The greater the vision, the greater its influence. Moses was able to tell the children of Israel "all that the Lord had spoken to him on the mount." Ezekiel remembered the exact day on which he received his vision of God; John remembered the hour when first he beheld the glory of the Messiah; Paul remembered the place and hour when he saw the Saviour. Every saint has seasons and scenes made ever sacred in his spiritual experience, because of special visions received. We are made strong and Godlike, in proportion as our life is marked and moulded by these seasons of spiritual vision. It will ever be thus. We can not but remember the first ray of light which illuminated our soul, and brought hope and life to our sad and sorrowing spirits in the dark night of guilt. Who can forget the first glimpse of God's saving grace in

Christ Jesus? It is easier to forget everything than this vision of love, and while the soul lives its memory will last. It is a fixed star of hope in our spiritual sky. While there are many who have been surrounded by religious influences all their lives, who are unable to analyze the forces that have contributed to their spiritual development, or point to any special season in their histories when they first saw God, yet it is imperative that all should know that glimpses of God have been received. There should be a time in the life of every believer, to which he can point as being a season in which his soul has seen the spiritual God, when in a state of spiritual ecstasy he breathed love in the very atmosphere of Heaven and was irradiated with the beams of God's holiness. No soul should be content without securing these seasons of spiritual serenity and sanctification. No soul will fail to find who will but seek. None privileged to receive will fail to retain.

III. RUMINATION.

"And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water."

Everything points to the fact that Moses ruminated long and well on the glimpses of God he had received. He thought again and again, mused and meditated, pondered and reflected on the vision

vouchsafed to him, until his soul became surcharged with God's glory. He gladly availed himself of the seclusion and solitude of Sinai to meditate on the glory that had been revealed to him. For forty days and forty nights he was in the mount, without time, opportunity, or probably inclination, to eat or drink. It is unnatural to suppose that all this time was occupied in receiving his glimpses of God or in writing the divinely-given precepts, while nothing is more natural than that he should ruminate on what had been revealed. He had been uplifted to a state of spiritual ecstasy by the vision vouchsafed to him until he was unconscious or unmindful of aught save the glory of God. When men secure great glimpses of God they become so lost in contemplation of the perfections of His being that they are unmindful of the claims of their physical nature, and live only to ruminate on the vision they have received. That Moses, who represented the law; Elijah, who represented the prophets, and Christ, the fulfillment of both, should each have spent forty days and forty nights in devout meditation after receiving a special revelation, surely teaches the spiritual value of rumination. Spiritual vision makes spiritual reflection imperative. Rumination is the process by which the soul assimilates glimpses of God. The spirituality of the soul is developed, not by what it has seen of

God, but by what it has assimilated of God. Reverential rumination is a condition of spiritual strength and Godliness. We become Godlike, in proportion as we ruminate on the glimpses of God we have received. Meditation is the law of development in the moral as well as in the mental world. Assimilation determines the growth of the mind and soul. As book-learning is so much raw material, which has to be coined in the mental mint into the currency of the realm of thought, before it can contribute to the growth or glory of the mind, so spiritual knowledge has to be assimilated by the soul, through devout meditation, before it can contribute to its spiritual life. Glimpses of God are valuable only when the soul has so ruminated upon them that through the process of assimilation they have become a constituent part of its very being. The great need of the world, intellectually and spiritually, is not more knowledge, but more thought. What it requires is not more revelation but more reverential reflection. Though glimpses of God are ever the soul's most precious heritage, yet until they become, through meditation, an integral part of our spiritual nature, they are like unutilized forces, invaluable but wasted energies. God gives a revelation of Himself only to the soul that is meditative, for no other is prepared to receive or to profit by

the revelation. Hence, it is invariably the rule that the greatest glimpses of God are given to the greatest souls, for the greatest souls are greatest in reflective and assimilative faculties. This is at once both the condition and the crown of greatness. Had Moses not ruminated upon the vision of God, and thus assimilated its glory, his transfiguration would have been impossible. God's spiritual nature is made known to the meditative soul only, and that in proportion as its meditation is spiritual. Receptivity is the secret of revelation. Revelation is the secret of reverential reflection, and rumination the secret of reproduction.

IV. REPRODUCTION.

"And when he came down from the mount, Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone. . . . And he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken to him in Mount Sinai."

Thus did Moses consciously and unconsciously reproduce the glimpses of God he had secured on Mount Sinai. Consciously, he uttered the words God to him had spoken; unconsciously, he reflected the divine glory he had seen. Thus do all men who have seen God reveal Him. Every man who hears the divine voice becomes a prophet,—a personified voice, the echo of the voice of God. What is

heard is heard for others, as well as for ourselves. Every revelation given, while important for ourselves, is none the less valuable to others. God reveals Himself not simply that the individual might be saved, but that through the individual He might redeem the race. Glimpses of God are not given to satisfy mere sentiment or to feed selfishness, but rather to prepare the recipient the better to serve God and his generation. The law of grace is that we love to give what love to us has given. We receive in order to give. The more generous we are in giving, the more generously shall we receive. We shall be rewarded with new revelation, according to our fidelity in reproducing revelations already received. Man's moral mission in the world is to mirror his Maker. Man mirrors God in proportion as he has been privileged to see His glory. Thus, when man sees God, God is seen in the man. When man has been illuminated with the beams of God's holiness, filled with the energy of divine light and irradiated by ineffable love, he becomes a personified conscience—a determinative element in men's character, and in their conception of God. The impulse to seek and the instinct to find God we call inspiration. The glimpses of God received, and visions reproduced, we call revelation. All men are not equally inspired, therefore all men do not

equally reveal God. There is no injustice in this, for as men are unequal in intellectual endowment, so are they in spiritual faculties, with this difference, however, that intellectual genius is a gift, while spiritual genius is a growth. That is, a man may be an intellectual genius and yet leave his mind uncultivated, for the love of knowledge is not always proportionate to the ability to know. But in the spiritual realm, the faculty to know is commensurate with the desire to know, superior knowledge being the reward of superior love. Thus, the desire for spiritual knowledge is the condition of spiritual sight. Inspiration is the power to receive knowledge of God; revelation, the reproduction of knowledge received. Inspiration is the faculty to appreciate vision; revelation is that faculty, exercising its function in reproduction. Inspiration comes from God; revelation comes through man. Inspiration is the cause; revelation is the effect. Inspiration is imperative to revelation; revelation is imperative to inspiration. The God of love could not but men inspire; inspired men could not but God reveal. The inspiration determines the revelation; the revelation is proportionate to the inspiration. God will be seen in the man in proportion as the man has seen God. The sun can not withhold its light nor the flower its fragrance, neither can the

inspired soul withhold its revelation. Man instinctively realizes that he has no right to reserve to himself knowledge vital to the welfare of others. Man receives light from Heaven that he might reflect it on the world. The soul that has seen God can not but help others to see Him. The most absorbing passion of the inspired soul is so to reveal God that men may be inspired with a passion to become God-like. That the revelation should be written is as natural as that the inspired soul should speak. The revelation being of pre-eminent importance to all people, its preservation in a permanent form accessible to all is imperative. The Bible is a reproduction of glimpses of God given to God-inspired men. It is a rich galaxy of glorious glimpses of God. It contains what the best of men at their best have seen of God, and as God's special relation to any soul is an indication of the natural relation He bears to all, what He speaks to one He speaks to all. This constitutes the authority of the Bible in matters of conduct, and its charm as a guide into the mystery of divine love. As God is ever the same, the revelation is unchangeable, though man's conception of both will vary according to his inspiration. God is ever giving to man greater discernment of revealed truth, and men in every age discover new and larger meanings in the revelation

made through inspired men. Men are privileged to-day to behold in the revelation, glories which were hidden from the inspired men through whom it was given. Thus, though the revelation is infallible, because divinely given, it neither exhausts nor excludes inspiration. God deals with soul as soul, and though He speaks to all as He speaks to each individual soul, He speaks to each as He speaks to all. What other men have seen of the divine glory and reproduced in their lives is valuable only as it stimulates the individual soul to seek the spiritual God. The Bible is not the consummation of divine knowledge, but rather one of God's primers, the study of which qualifies the soul for a higher revelation. When its teaching has become incorporated into the life of our soul, it becomes of practical value, and that in proportion as it prepares and adapts us to know more of God. He who rests with simply contemplating the revelation made through others, without rising to seek individual and immediate knowledge of God, is false to the genius of revelation and untrue to the profoundest impulse of his soul. To believe that knowledge of God travels only along the beaten lines of Biblical truth, is to limit the inspiration of the Almighty. The consummation and crown of all revelation is Jesus Christ. For eternity He will continue to be the

supreme manifestation of God, yet the soul will see the Father in the Son, not according to what others have seen or written, but as it is inspired by love immediately to interpret His life. We must see Christ before we can be transformed to His image, and at best the Bible is only a mirror which reflects His glory. In Heaven, as on earth, some new revelation will gladden the heart, and glimpses of God ever greet the gaze of the redeemed. Progressive revelation and increased knowledge are imperative to the happiness of the soul. Individual development in Godliness must ever depend on individual discovery. Increased knowledge is the secret of increased love, increased love the secret of increased service, and increased service the secret of increased glory and happiness. Conformity to Christ is possible only through individual communion with Him. The value of every life is the inspiration it gives men to seek individual communion with God. Thus, the measure of a man's influence on his generation is determined, not directly by the glimpses of God he has secured, but indirectly by the glory of God he reproduces in his life. The glory of any man is not that he has seen God, but that God is so seen in him that men through him are moved to love God. The power to reveal God and to reproduce His glory is the great essential qualification to serve

humanity and Heaven. Without this revealing love, knowledge and faith are as "sounding brass or a clanging cymbal." The greatest need of the world is more men who have seen God, and in whom God is seen,—men made so beautiful in holiness that they inspire men to become holy. The soul's highest attainment is to become so transparent that God is seen through it. This is possible only through living in the light of holy love. Moses looked with adoring eyes upon the glory of God, until he was unconsciously transformed to its very image. This is the secret of transfiguration—to draw so near the heart of God that our whole being, mental, moral and material, is irradiated with His light. In the light of love the face of Moses became luminous. He "wist not that his face shone." Unconsciously he was clothed with the glory of God, and unconsciously he reflected the light of ineffable love. True greatness is ever unconscious of its glory, and God alone can tell the value of unconscious influence. Moses was illuminated with divine light and irradiated with divine love, and thus unconsciously he reproduced the glory he had seen in the mount. Divine love alone can so irradiate the human, and make man Godlike. Let him who would be transfigured follow in the steps of Moses until he comes in touch with God, and by that touch is transformed

to His glorious image. He who is thus transfigured bears the image of God, and is like the image he bears. He creates a moral atmosphere around himself, in which selfishness and sin can not live. Such is the influence of Godliness. Godliness is the gathered gleanings of Glimpses of God. Glimpses of God—the glittering gems of grace—are the Genesis and goal of Godliness.

THE THREE CROSSES.

“ And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.”—LUKE 23: 33.

The three crosses of Calvary represent the three crosses of humanity. On one of these three crosses every man is crucified. The first is the cross of selfishness, the second the cross of self-surrender, and the third the cross of self-sacrifice. The first is the sinner's cross, the second the saint's, and the third the Saviour's. The sufferer on the first died losing life, the sufferer on the second died receiving life, and the sufferer on the third died giving life. The first was dead in sin, the second was dead to sin, and the third was the death of sin. Let us study the characters of these crucified ones, and strive to learn the lessons of their lives in order to understand the goal toward which we ourselves are moving. It is imperative that we decide immediately which of these three is our representative, in order that we may understand thoroughly our own

character, our influence on the world, the nature of the cross on which we are crucified, and the end which will inevitably be ours if we persistently pursue the same path. Up to the time of the crucifixion the characters of the two thieves who were crucified with Christ were so similar as to be almost identical. The principles by which they were prompted, the motives by which they were moved, their dishonor, disgrace and death, were so similar up to the crosses, where each turned his own way, that to represent the character of one is to faithfully portray the life of the other. They were thieves, or more correctly, robbers—wholesale plunderers, belonging most probably to the band of Barabbas. They were impulsive, ambitious, courageous. They sacrificed judgment for sentiment, honesty for notoriety. They became malefactors in order to become benefactors. They condemned in principle what they upheld in practice. They neither respected human laws nor obeyed the laws of Heaven. They were selfish enough to dishonor men, and sinful enough to disobey God. They aimed to secure national and political liberty through moral slavery. They endeavored to secure national right through moral wrong. They attempted to condemn national tyranny and social slavery through individual cruelty, oppression and crime. They fain would employ vice to

enthroned virtue. It is probable, however, that they were looked upon as public heroes because their motive, according to public opinion (regardless of the means employed or the result realized), was to facilitate the freedom and emancipation of their nation from the shame and slavery of the Romish yoke. This seems to be the only reasonable way of explaining the demand for the release of Barabbas by men who professedly were so attached to the Law of Moses, which required the death of every murderer. They looked upon him as a patriot, one who had claimed to be the Messiah, and bid fair to justify his claim. This being so, the people's position was clear and the contrast suggested in the question of Pilate all the more pointed when he asked, "Whom will ye that I release unto you, (Jesus) Barabbas or Jesus which is called Christ?" The people were ready to follow Barabbas, for in many things he was their ideal Messiah. Had Christ employed the same means, laying aside the love of law and the law of love; making the temporal prosperity of Israel the only concern of His life, and physical force instead of moral suasion the means by which to attain it, the Jews would not have crucified but would have crowned Him. Believing this, we can not but believe that the people who were so anxious to release the chief would glad-

ly, were it in their power, have released his associates also. The most reasonable way, therefore, of accounting for the crucifixion of these two thieves is by reminding ourselves that Pilate had been practically forced to crucify Jesus, and now gladly availed himself of the opportunity to avenge himself on the Jews by crucifying these two national patriots. It is well to bear in mind, however, that though Pilate nominally carried out the law and condemned them, yet in reality it was their own characters that crucified them. The law condemned them, but their lawlessness crucified them. So far, the lives of these two thieves had blended together and apparently no discord had ever existed. But on Calvary the harmony was destroyed and the similar became essentially dissimilar. The only explanation of the change is that Jesus Christ had come between them. One was crucified on the right, the other on the left of the Saviour. It is difficult to decide, regarding the crosses on Calvary, which was on the right and which was on the left. But if the penitent thief was then on the left, he has been on the right ever since; right side of truth and life, right side of the Saviour's love, right side of immortality and glory, and the right side of Heaven—the inside. The great change in the characters and conditions of these men is but the result of the

different influence the life and death of Christ had upon them. How differently they spent their last hours on earth. One wept because of the ingratitude of his life; the other hardened his heart. One declared the Saviour's innocency, while the other despised Him. One received, the other rejected the Redeemer. One blessed, the other blasphemed Emmanuel. This is why one died receiving, the other losing life,—the different relation in which they stood to Jesus Christ, the contrary effect which the person and atoning work of Christ had upon them. This is always so. Men that were alike up to the time they entered the Saviour's presence and were introduced to Divine Love have become essentially different in mind and in heart, in thought and in life. This must always be so. It is imperative that men be impressed and influenced by Emmanuel. They can not be better or worse because they have come into contact with Him. They will be better or worse according to the manner in which they will treat Him. Men must rise or fall, according to their conception of Christ. Every man must reject or receive the Redeemer, crucify or crown Christ. Neutrality is impossible. He must be the life or death of every man, and He will be to man what man makes Him to be. We determine what He shall be to us, in deciding what we will be to

Him. Receive Him, and He is your Redeemer; reject Him, and He will be your destroyer and death. Thus it proved to be in the case of the characters now under consideration. The one died receiving, the other losing life. Each lost his natural life because he loved it and sought to save it, without remembering that "whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." Practically, these men committed suicide, for their untimely death was but the result of a wasted life. Sins are punished in this life, and although a man receive forgiveness for his transgression, yet he is forced to suffer the inevitable punishment inflicted by Nature upon those who violate her laws. God will forgive, but Nature—never. The penitent thief, although he believed in Christ and was saved from the moral consequences of his sin, yet had to suffer the physical consequences thereof. This in itself is a strong reason against delaying repentance until the day of death, for while we sin we hasten on that day. It is sadly true that many act as if the King of Terrors moved too slow, and through sin they hasten on his approach. Even in the article of death the impenitent thief rushed on impetuously, as if eager to embrace the second death. Thus he died losing life, and as his loss of eternal life is typical of the way in which

every sinner loses it, we are anxious to inquire how he lost it, and this brings us to consider

I. THE CROSS OF SELFISHNESS.

The sad death of this man is but the sequel of selfishness, which indeed is the secret source of all the sorrows, suffering and shame of society. Selfishness is the soil out of which springs all sin. It is the root of evil and the bane of life. This man died *losing life*, because selfishness inevitably works out its own self-destruction. It was possible for him to save his life even while in the agony of death, and though he died yet to live again. He had every advantage necessary to know the way of salvation. He saw the Son of God in the act of sacrificing Himself on the altar of love to save sinners. In the presence of holiness he could not but realize his own depravity. In the face of the self-sacrifice of Jesus could he less than be cognizant of the selfishness of his own soul? Compared with the depth of Christ's love, how shallow was his life! The evidences of Christ's Messiahship within his reach were of a more convincing character than those which converted his comrade in crime. The strongest proof of Christ's Divinity and Christianity's choice credential is the salvation of a soul. Therefore the most undeniable, imperishable and convincing evidence that Jesus

was the Christ was in this man's possession. He was an eyewitness of the power of Christ to save, for he saw one snatched as a brand from the burning, and was privileged to behold his soul blossom into virtue and love at the living touch of the Lord of Life. He heard the beautiful and tender words in which Christ responded to the faith of the penitent as expressed in the request "Remember me." He heard all the words which fell from the Saviour's lips while dying for the sin of the world—words that have converted millions of men;—words which express His relation to the world that He was leaving, and to the world into which He was entering;—words so fraught with all-conquering love as to eternally declare Him to be the Son of God and the Saviour of men. He listened to those words, so simple yet so sublime, so full of calm courage and confidence as to form a firm foundation for faith. Moreover, the penitent thief, while expressing his belief in Christ's innocence, indirectly endeavored to bring him to repentance and to trust in Christ for life. The reason that this man lost life was not because he had fallen out of the reach of divine mercy; not because light on his own condition and Christ's compassion was inaccessible; not because he had sinned too long, although it was the eleventh hour, but because he refused life on the only condi-

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tion God could give it. He ignored the proffered salvation, and blasphemed the Saviour. He not only sinned in the dark, but refused to repent in the light. He was condemned not because he had not sought the Saviour, but because he refused to love for his life, the Life of Love. This man lost life, while his companion in crime, who had sinned as much and as long, and had fallen as low as he, sought and found life. Thus, the penitent condemns the impenitent. This loss of life was voluntary, therefore criminal. Like all men who are lost, he simply refused to be saved. No man is ever lost for any other reason. Thus he perished, and that in *Calvary*. Near the Saviour's cross, within the sound of His voice, in sight of His self-sacrifice, he lost life. In Calvary, where life is found and freely offered to all, he courted death. Calvary, the birthplace of the saint, became to him the deathplace of the sinner. In Calvary, where Emmanuel the Emperor of Emancipation was enthroned, and where He established His empire, this man sold his soul to the eternal slavery of selfishness, sin and Satan. Near the fountain of life, he drank the poison of eternal death. While the world's Redeemer opened the door of salvation to all willing to be saved, while his companion in life and death repented, believed and found life eternal,

while the news was being carried by the angels to the Heavenly Jerusalem, he blasphemed and died. Thus, he became reproached of men and condemned of God. His name has become a signal of death and of destruction, one of the finger posts on Hell's highway, and a lighthouse on crime's cliffs. Angels wept because of his ruin, devils gloried in his destruction. Men, moved by human sympathy with the perishing, would leave him to the compassion of Christ, and draw the veil over his sad end, saying sadly, "He is gone." Gone—but where? Gone—but how? These are questions which the Judgment Day shall answer. Therefore, do we hold our peace. This man's life and death give us a perfect portrayal of the history of every unbeliever. All men who are lost in Christendom are lost in the same way, in the same place, and for the same reason. He is a perfect representative, all in all, of unbelievers. Whatever may be a man's reason for rejecting Christianity, for refusing salvation, his condition, character and crime are practically the same as that of the impenitent thief. Men will challenge this, and while they shudder and say, "Shame" when they see the sad, sorrowful sequel of selfishness, yet they refuse to recognize the reproduction of the impenitent thief in themselves. If you dare suggest the thing, they will treat you with contempt,

and settle the subject with silent scorn. Oh man, thou shalt have all the fair play possible, for thou wilt need it all. Thou shalt be thine own judge and advocate. Where is the picture overdrawn? What has been mentioned respecting this thy representative, which is not strictly true concerning thee? Dost thou claim that thou art not dishonest, in that thou obeyest the laws of the land and art accounted just of men? Thou didst not create thyself: thy life, therefore, is not thine own. In living for self thou dost rob humanity and Heaven. Dost say thou art no murderer? In refusing salvation, thou dost voluntarily sell and seal thy soul for the second death. Is not this the greatest of all murders? Dost claim thy reason is not dethroned? What is sin but moral madness? Not to understand our duty toward man and God; not to realize the true end of life; not to obey the highest and profoundest instincts of the soul, is foolishness without a fellow in the fertile field of folly. Where, then, is thy wisdom? Is it seen in being blindly led by thy passions to the perilous precipice over which thousands of souls have been hurled to hell? Dost claim thou art no blasphemer? What is greater blasphemy than to acknowledge the Saviour's right to the soul, and yet refuse to serve Him; sympathizing with Christ's sufferings, yet sinful and selfish

enough, in order to satisfy thy sensuous soul, to pierce afresh His sacred side? What greater blasphemy than to promise to give thyself to Christ when in the hands of death, powerless to help or hinder virtue's victory? Art thou not condemned and crucified? Does not thy conscience condemn thee, and thy sins crucify thee? If not crucified, then art thou free, but thy hands and feet are nailed to Satan's cross of selfishness, and none but Christ can free thee. Thy character is criminal, the crucial crisis of thy career has come. Thou art yet in *Calvary*, the only place where salvation is possible. Thou art near the cross of Christ. Thou hast seen the Saviour suffering, hast seen His torn brow and wounded side, but thou art unconcerned. Inanimate creation is convulsed with compassion for the Christ so cruelly crucified. The sun becomes ashamed of his own brightness, and rather than look upon his Creator crushed, veils himself with dark clouds and hides in shame. The rugged rocks, adamant hard, break their hearts and rend in twain at the sight of the Rock of Ages—cleft. The grave can not keep its own when the Resurrection and the Life become the death of death. Everything is full of interest in the atonement of the cross, save unbelieving man. Thy companions who were condemned and crucified on the same cruel

cross have repented and believed, and have been freed by the great Emancipator of souls. Thou hast seen the nails taken out of their cross, their bonds broken. Thou hast witnessed the expressions of joy which flooded their faces. Thou hast heard the shout of hallelujah which fell from their lips. In love they have pleaded with thee and sought to bring thee to repentance, but thou art still ungrateful, unbelieving and unmoved. This but drives the nails deeper into thy cross. Thou art despising salvation, yea refusing life, in the only place, in the only way, in which God Himself can give it. Be reconciled, then, to God. Haste to make Christ thy friend. There is danger and death in delay. Remember, this is a fair average: For each one who secures life in the eleventh hour, another fails. The impenitent thief failed to find life. Follow not in his footsteps, lest death be the fruit of thy folly, and thou suffer the greatest downfall possible in the moral universe of God; from Calvary to—Hell.

II. THE CROSS OF SELF-SURRENDER.

Self-surrender and self-denial are supreme conditions of spiritual life. They are the secrets of spiritual sight, strength and salvation. This man died *finding life*. While fast losing his natural life, he sought and found eternal life. While being

robbed of the former, he was rewarded with the latter. The death of his body declared the triumph of evil; the life of his spirit declared the triumph of Emmanuel. Thus, like every saint, he became living to God as he died to the world. He received life because he fulfilled in Christ all the conditions of salvation.

(a) *His repentance was real and remorseful.* He acknowledged his guilt, the justice of his condemnation, and changed for the better in reference to the Saviour, sin, society and self. This is always the first fruit, as well as the final test, of the reality of repentance. This man learned to look upon his own life in the true light, because he considered it in the light of Christ's life. He saw the folly, the faithlessness and the failure of his life. He realized the precious privileges and opportunities he had lost, the valuable time he had wasted, and the wealth of love he had slighted. This created true contrition in his soul, and forced him to Christ for forgiveness.

(b) *His faith was mighty and living.* He believed in Christ when everybody else appeared to disbelieve. Although the disciples had left Jesus, and the religious teachers of His own nation rejected and ridiculed His claims, yet this man believed in Him. He received Him as his King,

though He had not yet come into His kingdom. He looked upon Him as the Prince of Life when in the article of death. He believed in Him as a Saviour when slain, and the Messiah when murdered. His faith was intelligent, for he gathered all the evidences within his reach concerning the superhuman in the Saviour, weighed them and found that they were strong enough to convince him of His Messiahship. He looked upon His calm courage, divine dignity, pathetic patience, changeless charity, saving sympathy, sacred sorrow, loving life and living love, sublime simplicity and sanguine, spiritual serenity, amidst the storm of sorrow and suffering in the stronghold of sin. He listened to His intercession for His enemies when he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He saw that He lived and died in harmony with His principles of love. Unitedly these things formed an irresistible argument to the mind of the penitent, that Jesus was the "Christ." What convinced this man is, in reality, evermore the great proof of His Divinity. No miracle more clearly manifests it, no words more lovingly express it than the death of the cross.

(c) *His love was strong and changless.* He loved Christ sufficiently to disregard all else in order to serve Him. He well knew that to declare

his belief in the Saviour was to establish hatred between himself and his nation, and also forfeit the common bond of sympathy which existed between him and his fellow-thief. This required strength of soul, courage of conviction and a sacrificing spirit. His prayer was full of faith and love—"Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." A short but a strong prayer; a humble yet a high and holy petition. Prayers are measured and valued, not by length, but by breadth and depth. This petition contains all that man can desire for time and for eternity, and all that God can give. He struck the keynote in the anthem of happiness, hope and holiness when he desired to be lovingly remembered by the Lord of Life. The answer which Christ gave proved the value of this prayer, and His appreciation of the love and faith that prompted it. "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Christ never bore a clearer witness to His own Divinity than He did while dying. These are surely the words of a conqueror and not the conquered. He recognizes and reveals, in the "valley of the shadow of death," that "all authority is given to Him in Heaven and on earth," and that He has "the keys of death and Hell." Thus, He is the ruler of all worlds and the Prince of Paradise. Of all death scenes, this is the most ideal. There is a

combination of things which make it so. He died while serving the Saviour. He died like the Redeemer, in the same manner, at the same time, in the same place. The death of Moses was very beautiful, dying alone but with God, far removed from everything that made death hard; passing from a glimpse of the earthly Canaan into the Heavenly Canaan. An ideal death, surely. But of all deaths this is the grandest in the annals of history; going arm in arm with Christ through the "valley of the shadow of death," and entering into glory together. What inexpressible privilege to be introduced by Emmanuel into His own empire. This is the inheritance of every soul that has surrendered to the Saviour. There is a sense in which every saint dies with the Saviour, and in which the Saviour dies with every saint. He goes through the death struggle with His disciples. The penitent thief loved Christ sufficiently to spend his last moments in serving Him, in declaring His innocency, and in winning others to think favorably of Christ. This is the only acceptable service, all that Christ requires, and all that man can give. To live only to love is the law of life. It is impossible to realize the depth of this man's love unless we remember that, while suffering the most excruciating pains in the anguish and agony of death, he is all forgetful of himself but

ever mindful of the Master. This is why he received life. He possessed all the excellencies of the Christian character in germ, if not in growth. He was noble and true. As soon as he was convinced of the Saviour's innocence and of his own guilt, without hesitancy he bears testimony to both facts before the world. He had not only faith in principle but also in practice. He was brave and devoted. In the face of all foes, when the battle was fiercest and the danger greatest, when fiends in fury cried, "Victory now or never," when the fierce fire of fanaticism in frenzy flamed, when the Saviour suffered in solitude while struggling for supremacy, he pressed to the front of the battle and acknowledged Him King. He was sympathetic and loving, not only with Christ, but with his fellow-thief. Like every Christian, he could not keep the truth to himself, but, as the sun gives light and life, so did this man offer his light to lead his comrade to Christ, until his life burnt out in death. All his words, from his conversion to his death, are full of love. These elements in character are God's delight. Christ honors the man in whom they are found. The penitent thief not only received eternal life, but his name has been immortalized because of his attachment to and love for the Saviour. His services were sanctioned and sanctified by the Sav-

iour, and sealed with success. The robber was reformed and made a revealer of righteousness; the plunderer was made a preacher of the principles of the Prince of Peace. His rags were changed for the robes which the glorified wear. He who was too degraded to live with men in the morning, through the mighty power of grace at noon became pure and glorified enough to be the personal companion of the peerless King of glory in Paradise. His sorrow was turned into joy, his weeping into a song, his death unto life, and from the cross he was led to wear a crown, to join the happy band who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and to enjoy the inexpressible privilege of being introduced to the realities of the eternal world—yea, and to God, by Christ, as the first fruit and proof of the magnetic power of the cross. This man's conversion was no greater miracle than any ordinary conversion. God's laws are the same to all. He is no "respector of persons." The conditions of salvation are the same for all men, at all times. Then all may hope and none need despair. Let no man think because the penitent thief was saved in the eleventh hour that deathbed salvation is easy. Without question this man's struggle was a hard one, and he who has not strength of conviction sufficient to seek salvation when physically strong will

in all probability fail to find it when becoming too weak to live. Let all who would find life, and though they die, live evermore, self-surrender themselves to the Saviour, serve Him with such loyal love, sincerity of spirit, completeness of character, as the impenitent thief, from their conversion to their death, and they also shall be glorified in the eternal presence of Christ in glory.

III. THE CROSS OF SELF-SACRIFICE.

Jesus Christ, whose life was perfect, whose character to man was righteous and to God holy, whose words were full of grace and truth, who was tender yet just, merciful yet righteous, of His own free will laid down His life for others. The Infinite in mind, yet lowly in heart, the most despised yet the most charitable, the One most hated yet the One most loving, who though rich yet became poor that man through His poverty might be made rich, laid down His life for others. The author of joy, yet a man of sorrows, who spent His life to do good to the men who spent theirs to do Him evil, laid down His life for others. He blessed those that cursed Him, loved those who hated Him, prayed for those who crucified Him, and died for those who sought His life. Thus He lived and died for His enemies, living to give life, dying to destroy death. This is self-

sacrifice. The death of Jesus Christ was voluntary; He died of His own free will. Though Pilate condemned Him to death, yet it was love that crucified Him and riveted Him to the cross. He died because He was strong enough not to live; man dies because he is too weak not to die. Jesus alone was strong enough to die; other men die because they are too weak to live. He loved enough to die that those whom He loved might live. He could not "save Himself," because He had determined to save others. Love alone made it imperative that He should die. Self-sacrificing love is the secret of all that the Saviour suffered. The sorrow of the Sinless, because of sin, culminated in the self-sacrifice of the Saviour for the sinner. Self-sacrifice was at once both the condition and the crown of Christ's suffering. His kingdom is founded on self-sacrifice. In death He established His kingly right, and His cross led to the crown. Without the cross, Christ would have been without the crown. It was through the cross of self-sacrifice that Christ vanquished vice and gave virtue the victory. The cross of Christ is truth's trophy, virtue's victory, love's life and God's glory. The cross of Christ is the best exposition possible on His life. The light of His life would have blinded men with its very brilliancy, had it not been for the shadow of the

cross. Men would never have understood the life of Christ had it not been for the explanation which His death gave of it. The world would never have learned the lesson which for three years He had been so busily enforcing in His life—self-sacrifice as the law of life—had it not been for the full exemplification of it made in His death. He had taught that he who would save his life must lose it, but the human heart could never have understood His meaning, save in the light of the triumph of redeeming love in Christ's self-sacrifice. He taught men to forgive their enemies, but what man could have believed in the possibility of such a miracle of love, had it not been for the prayer, "Father, forgive them." The glorious achievements of Christ's cross of self-sacrifice alone could have moved men to embrace the principle of self-sacrifice as the condition and crown of all life. Nothing could have more perfectly illustrated his character and life, in principle and in aim, than His heroic death. The victory for which He lived could not have been secured, save by His own virtuous death. The cross of Christ satisfied the moral law by meeting its claims and increased its influence by proving its importance, the justice of its demands and the possibility of giving it absolute obedience. The Author of the law came under the law and satisfied the law.

The cross of Christ revealed the true character of God as the just yet merciful, righteous yet loving Father. It formed a new link between the heart of humanity and the heart of holiness. The cross of Christ means for man reconciliation, regeneration, redemption. It has given man a new conception of duty, manward and Godward, and a new inducement to philanthropy and self-denial. The cross is the Saviour's sermon on self-sacrifice, as the secret of spiritual strength and supremacy over selfishness and sin. Self-sacrifice is not only the principle on which life through Christ is possible to man, but also the principle on which life in Christ is possible to man. Self-sacrifice is not only the condition on which Christ gives His life for man, but also the condition on which man can give his life to Christ. Through self-sacrifice Christ lived like man; through self-sacrifice man lives like Christ. In self-sacrifice Christ loved and lived for men; in self-sacrifice men love and live for Christ. Thus, Jesus Christ died not only as an atonement for our sin, but as an example and inspiration for our life. He is our great ideal, and all who would secure the victory over sin and self must learn to deny themselves, as He did, and ever honor the law of self-sacrifice. We need not be crucified literally as He was, but we must crucify all self and be in truth crucified to all sin if

we would secure the crown of sanctification. The way of the cross alone is the way of the crown. There is no royal road save the royal road of love and self-sacrifice. He who would wear the crown must bear the cross; he that would reign with the Saviour must with the Saviour suffer. Self-sacrifice is the secret of sanctification. Every Christian, therefore, has his cross and the life of every believer has its Calvary. In Calvary every Christian is crucified and glorified. There his cross is uplifted, there he is uplifted on his cross, and uplifted through his cross. There his body is torn, his side pierced and the nature of his soul revealed. There he bows his head for death to crown him, dies for his principles of love, and signs and seals with his blood God's right to his soul. There, he commences and succeeds to live, by dying, and learns to find his life by losing it. The Calvary of every soul is the place where the crown is gained through the cross. This hour of crucifixion is the most solemn and sacred of any life. It is the hour of suffering, the hour of solitude, the hour of spiritual sorrow, the hour of self-sacrifice, yea—the hour of death, the hour when Hell has to be conquered and Heaven and holiness attained. It is not strange that every soul sweats, as it were, drops of blood in Gethsemane, when Calvary looms in the distance. It is not

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strange when men are thus moved to the depths of their being under the shadow of the cross, their souls sorrowful unto death, that in agony of spirit they cry out, "If it be possible, let this cup pass by;" nor yet strange, having received strength from God, to hear them say, "Thy will, not mine, be done." Thus while there is a sense in which Christ in death made atonement for sin and tasted death for every man, and thus died in a manner impossible to any man, yet there is a sense in which, through self-sacrifice, man lives again the life of Christ and dies again the death of the cross. Through self-sacrifice the Christian is crucified together with Christ, and with Christ shall be glorified. He who would know the true end of life, let the cross of Christ inform him. The cross of Christ is like the vigil eye of God, guiding and guarding the soul along the rough road of self-sacrifice, to the heart of holiness and Heaven. He who wants inspiration for strength and self-denial in the sacred service of love, let him breathe the spirit of the self-sacrificing Saviour. My brother, art thou downcast because of difficulties, despairing because of danger? Is thy heart faint and the battle hard? Then comfort thyself with the thought that thy help is nigh, thy glory near. If tempted while bearing thy cross to wonder what the end will be, fix thy gaze on thy

Saviour's cross and remember His victory. He who does not practise the principle of self-denial, obey the law of self-sacrifice, strive to secure the crown of sanctification and the joy set before him, has in reality not commenced to live. He is a stranger to the noblest impulses, the highest hope, the most sacred bliss, and the purest joy possible to humanity. He who is moved by this spirit is kept in perfect peace and clothed with immortal glory. The everlasting crown of righteousness shall he wear, and when the stars lose their light and the sun perish with cold, yet shall he shine like a star in the peace and purity of Heaven. Secure the cross and the crown is yours.

THE SUCCESS OF FAILURE.

“Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.”—LUKE 24: 5-6.

The chapter of our text opens by introducing the “day,” the “first day of the week,” and the first day in the spiritual life of the disciples after the long dark night of the crucifixion of their Lord. Let us seek to realize the inexpressible privilege of spending a night in solemn solitude and eloquent silence upon one of the majestic mountains of God, to witness the rising of the sun. We reach the summit as the “shades of night are falling fast.” The firmament is draping itself in suggestive black, as if it would wear appropriate mourning apparel. How sad the scene, how solemn the funeral service. We mingle our tears with the dewdrops, the tears of night, for the departed light, and with the night we are silent in the possession of knowledge too sad-sacred for speech. The eloquence of the day is exchanged for the profound philosophy of the night. With sadness and awe we enter the temple

of darkness, where amidst the gathering gloom, on the stage of solitude and silence, we witness night impersonating death. We turn our eyes downward. How like a grave is the earth! We look around us. How like a shroud is the darkness! We gaze upward. How like the arched vault of death is Heaven's dome! How wearily the time drags on, but how active are those dark clouds! They move together like a trained army. Verily, they be warriors of the night. Ever the clouds increase and array themselves until every star has died out. All lingering hope for the supremacy of light has perished. In vain we fan the dying embers, their momentary glow but makes the night more hideous. Is not the throne of night secure, its supremacy and sovereignty established and the reign of darkness eternal? Slowly, silently and sorrowfully the night is spent until the day is at hand. What is that? A shining arrow thrown by the sun-archer with his bow of light has pierced the heart of night, and we behold it bleeding there—nay, rather a pencil of light with which the sun writes in letters of fire “War” on the dark scroll of the clouds. The portals are opened and from the sun's heart rushes a flood of light, like a noble army with shining, dazzling spears, covering the heavens to do battle with the powers of darkness. How brief the fray! The

army of night is quickly routed. Darkness retreats. Light is hot in the chase until the spoils of war fill the sky. The battle is over, and see! the sun clothed with the glow and glory of youth majestically ascends his throne in the heavens, the universally recognized King of Day. How regal his reign and how glorious his government! Everything is transformed in his presence and transfigured in his light. A miracle of life is wrought amidst the tombs and vaults of death. Everything is brimful of life. The balmy breezes breathe love. The birds take up their sweet interrupted song; the flowers of the field blush and glow as they kiss and embrace the warm rays of the sun. All nature is like a sweet instrument, flooding the morning air with sweetest music. Man receives his inspiration; life is sweet and precious; joy and gladness fill his heart, as water floods the sea and fragrance fills the flower.

In the preceding chapter we have a record of the strange experiences of the disciples in the night of soul they spent on Calvary. We find them, in sorrowful silence and solitude of soul, witnessing the gathering gloom. The light of hope is declining, the day of faith is in the agony of death, the sun of their life is setting fast. It goes down, down as low as the grave, and they despair of its ever rising again. How gloomy the general aspect! How sad

the scene! How keen their suffering, sorrowful their hearts, terror-stricken their spirits. Despair is clearly written on each feature and anguish furrows their soul. The life of their life is dying; their Saviour is slain, their God is dead. Can any darkness be greater or can the night cast deeper shadows? They look downward. What is the earth? A beautiful garden. True, but a garden with its heart ripped open to form a grave for their Lord. They look around them and behold dark doubt and darker disbelief are busy preparing a grave for their dead faith. They gaze upward. What is heaven but a sealed book, the dwelling place of darkness and of mystery, which mocks them in their despair. They live—nay, they but exist “in the valley of the shadow of death.” The night moves on, and with it they are carried into greater darkness. They are forced to stand by the open grave—yea, to enter the silent sepulchre of death. And oh, what a sad spectacle meets their gaze. There, motionless, lifeless, lies the body of Jesus, and their hope and heart lie buried with Him there. They turn away their gaze lest their eyes, like setting stars, lose their light. But already they are blinded by the blood-tears of heart, and although they leave the grave and lose sight of their dead deliverer, yet the silent sepulchre and the slain Saviour vanish not from

their vision. Let them seek solace anywhere, yea everywhere, but all the springs of gladness and consolation are dry. Life is but a wilderness, barren and burning. Oh that sleep—the angel of the sorrowful—might rock them in his arms into sweet repose. But no, harassed and tortured on the rack of despair they are kept alive to the presence of death. Surely this is the darkest night of their life and the darkest hour of that dark night. No! night breeds night, as sorrow brings sorrow. The darkness deepens; they struggle back to the grave, and there the climax is reached. The night of night sets in—the body of Jesus is missing. The tomb is empty. Here is sorrow upon sorrow. No single star of hope studs their spiritual sky, but despair reigns without a rival. Suddenly, like a flash of lightning, the revelation of Heaven, in the words of the angels, bursts upon their soul. The eyelids of the dawn are opened, and from the portals of light, like a “bridegroom coming forth from his chamber,” appears truth and authoritatively declares that the day has dawned and the reign of darkness and despair ended, in the precious words, “He is not here, but is risen.” This was a living truth, lovingly told, containing within it the resurrection and the life of their faith. But, as light had to battle with darkness for supremacy, so despair

made war with hope, for the words appeared "like idle tales" unto them. But the light of truth persistently opposes the darkness of doubt until, ultimately, it vanishes as the darkness disappears at the dawn of day. And behold faith in splendor and glory ascends the throne of the soul. Sweet confidence fills their heart, midday light floods their life when the Risen Lord appeared unto them and said, "Peace be unto you." We are forced to stand awhile, however, with the disciples in the shade of night and endeavor to analyze its deep shadows, for if we understand not the night, we can not appreciate the day. He who has not struggled with doubt will never be strong in faith. The disciples' night of soul was born when they lost the living Jesus among the dead. Its shadow deepened when they lost the *dead* Jesus from among the dead. They saw the first ray of light in the words "He is risen." God turned the shadow of death into the clear light of morning in their experience, and they basked in the warm smile of the noonday sun when, through the empty grave, they were enabled to see—the risen, living Christ. They failed to find Jesus where they expected to find Him, "among the dead," but they did find Him where they did not expect to find Him, among "the living," and they found Him among the living because they *failed* to find Him among

the dead. So that our subject is—*The Success of Failure.*

We have in the words of the text a record of an unsuccessful attempt to find Jesus. They contain the secret of every unsuccessful search for the Saviour. Mark well that the question asked the disciples is not,—Why do ye seek Jesus? nor—Why do ye not seek Jesus? No. They did seek Him, and it was right and natural that they should. But why seek Him, “the living among the dead?” It was because they sought Him where He was not to be found that they were thus interrogated.

I. FAILURE.

He was unfound where sought, —“among the dead.” The disciples could not but seek Jesus in the grave. Their love constrained them; they could not live without Him. If they could not have the living Christ, then they must get near the dead Jesus. Though faith had lost Jesus “among the dead,” yet love kept Him enthroned in the heart. Moreover, they sought Him “among the dead,” because they had forgotten Christ’s references to His resurrection, or failed to believe them. Hence, they knew not where else to seek Him. It was here they expected to find Him, because it was here they had lost Him. This was the greatest loss of their life—losing Jesus

in the grave. It was so unexpected; they evidently had not calculated on the death of Christ. "This shall never happen to Thee" was the confident assertion when once He referred to His death. Had He not more than once robbed death of his prey, yea, redeemed men from the very jaws of the grave? Who, then, would have anticipated the death of such an one? How great, therefore, must have been their disappointment, despondency and despair when they laid Him in the grave. Then their faith gave place to doubt and their confidence to fear. They had faithfully followed Him throughout His public life. He was their all, and their all had they left to follow Him. Their faith had been amply repaid in His fidelity. Each day brought some new proof that He was the Messiah. His gracious words and Godlike works made them confident that He was the Christ, the "Son of God." How they loved and revered Him! Every hour only increased their love and their desire to be like Him, until they suddenly lose Him in the grave. The grave is the place where man still suffers his heaviest losses. Here the parent loses the child, and the child the parent. Here the tie that binds is severed and love loses sight of the loved, and here the disciples lose their Saviour. There are many to-day who follow Christ faithfully throughout His

public life until they come to the grave, and there they lose Him. They worship with the wise men at the cradle; they watch with eager eyes and soul-admiration His miraculous power. They bask in the glow of His love and shout "Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," when they behold His triumphs and glory. They follow in silence and awe to the garden of Gethsemane. They go to the mock trial with bleeding hearts, and while lingering looking upon the crucified One, they are nailed with Him to the cross. Their faith, though frail, fights bravely against unbelief, hoping to the end that He who "saved others" would also save Himself. But in beholding His lifeless form taken down from the cross and like other men, when their lives are ended, laid in the grave, their faith loses its hold on Jesus, and dies. He is still to them the best and kindest of men, but only a man at best. The grave is one of the enigmas of experience, the birthplace of many of life's mysteries, and the deathbed of many a faith. Placing the Creator of the world to lie in a manger, the mighty God becoming a helpless babe, the humiliation of the Son of God, is a mystery that paralyzes many a hope and destroys many a faith. The mystery of mysteries, however, is—the slain Saviour, the dead Son of God. When the Everlasting arms are folded in death,

and He who laid the foundations of the world is laid in the grave, many in thus beholding Him lose Him, and like the disciples, turn from the grave leaving their Jesus there. Though to them the Christ be dead, the memory of the dead Jesus lives and is loved. Faith often dies when love lives on. Indeed love never dies. Moved by love, these men, though their faith in the Divinity of Christ has perished, yet honor and reverence the *man* Jesus, and like the disciples they would embalm His body. They never find the body of Jesus, however. Disappointment alone is the reward of their pilgrimage to the grave, for all they find is an empty tomb. This search inevitably ends in failure, and this brings us to another great loss—losing Jesus from the grave.

If the disciples had never thought of losing Jesus in the grave, much less had they expected to lose him out of the grave. They followed to the grave and there lost Him; now they follow Him into the grave yet lose Him. This completes their loss and is the consummation of their sorrow and solitude. Previous to this, they possessed His body, and that was untold wealth, a rich legacy. If Judas sold the living Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, nothing could have induced these men to part with the dead body of Jesus. Now, however, they have only an empty

tomb, and can only gaze on the place where He lay. There are many disciples still who are full of sadness and disappointment while they stand by the empty grave, and gaze on the place where Jesus lay, because they behold Him not. They see angels, but not Jesus. They hear the sweet voices of the Heavenly Heralds, but much more would they have preferred to listen to the dumb speech of his wounds — the pierced side, the torn brow and the wounded hand. What are the words of angels to them now? They but little heed them; their grief is too great. Without Jesus, even angels fail to interest them, for what angel can take the place of Jesus? Better far is a dead Jesus than a host of living angels; yea, more attractive is Jesus in His death shroud than angels in the glorious robes of the world of light. Let no one fail, however, to notice the attraction Jesus had for angels. Before the Incarnation, though the angels made many visits to our world, they never had time to linger, but always seemed in haste to fulfill their errands of mercy so as to return home again. They were so homesick it was almost an impossibility to keep them over night. But when Jesus came to tread this earth, He drew the angels in a rich galaxy around Him. They felt so much at home at His birth that they sang with joy. Verily they would have been lonely in Heaven without Jesus. If He

takes up His abode in a stable, that is the center of attraction to them. If He goes to the wilderness, they must follow Him there. If He enters the garden of suffering they are with Him there. When He is laid in the grave, there do they dwell. The grave never entertained angels until the Lord of Life made His royal visit there. But the grave has ever since had an attraction to angels, and whoever will may see angels in his grave, for evermore sacred is the spot where every saint sleeps his last sleep. Though all may find angels, none can find Jesus in the grave, and many who seek Him fail to find Him, because they seek Him where He is not to be found—"among the dead." But who are they who are seeking the "living among the dead?" The scientist, who seeks to explain nature's life and laws without God; seeks in dead matter the creative genius of the universe, and expects to find in evolution the explanation of mind—seeks "the living among the dead." He who seeks the origin of the religious instinct and man's moral nature in education, and the cause of conversion and religious revival in emotional excitement, seeks "the living among the dead." He who seeks to account for Christianity—the greatest moralizing influence in the world—through a deceived or a deceiving founder, "seeks the living among the dead." He who

would account for the New Testament, the Book above every other which has made savage men humane and barbaric nations civilized, by the delusion or fraud of the authors, "seeks the living among the dead." The positivist, who seeks the incentive and the inspiration to holiness in the human and not in the Divine, "seeks the living among the dead." The rationalist who would account for Christ by the Jesus, and explains the supernatural by the natural, "seeks the living among the dead." The atheist who banishes God out of His own universe and would trace the energies of mind to matter, seeks the source of the moral energies in the human mind, and thus makes death the creator of life, "seeks the living among the dead." The ritualist who seeks life in formality; the literalist who looks for spirituality through the letter of the creed, the prayer book or Bible; the Papist who expects salvation through dogma, church, Mary, or Pope, seek "the living among the dead." He who seeks eternal life anywhere but in Christ, sanctification in any way but through the Holy Ghost, "seeks the living among the dead." These men find nothing but an empty tomb. Disappointment and failure inevitably follow their blind search, and with the disciples of old, their experience verifies our statement that Jesus is unfound where sought. Oh,

how many there are in the world who in bitter agony of spirit unconsciously cry out for Him, and how many there are who weary at heart and heavily laden with conscious guilt, who are unable to find Jesus, and are therefore deprived of the rest and life He promises and is so anxious to give, not because they do not seek Him, but because they seek Him where He is not to be found. Hence are we forced to ask, "Where may we find the Messiah? How may we come into His presence and realize that He is indeed the Saviour, the Son of God?" Let the experience of the disciples further instruct us. We learn that they found Jesus, and found Him where they did not expect to find Him.

II. SUCCESS.

He was unsought where found, among the living. The disciples, though they lost Jesus in the grave, found Him out of the grave, and this was the greatest discovery of their life. They lost Him out of the world, to find Him in the grave; then they lost Him out of the grave, to find Him in the world. They found among the living, Him they had sought "among the dead." This is always the case. Among the living only is He found, and there all may find Him. There were three places where the Lord was found of the disciples after the Resur-

rection, that are typical and representative of the places where He is always found. They found Him in a Garden, in the Home, and in the Upper Chamber. The first stands for nature, the second for Providence, the third for grace. He was first found in a—*Garden*—near a grave, close to the empty tomb. Mary, with sad and sorrowful heart, in solitude, stood, riveted by love, to the spot where He had lain. She knew He was not there, yet the place was sacred—He had been there. Fast flowed her tears, and through those tears she saw her Saviour. She wept on until Jesus stood transfigured before her. How manifold are the changes of life! Mary now weeps at the grave of Jesus. But a little while ago “Jesus wept” by the grave of Lazarus. Thus we find the two poles of existence meet at the grave—the strong and the weak, the Teacher and the taught. Life is but a bank, in which we invest sympathy, which we draw out later on with interest. Jesus was never more Divine than when He wept by the grave of Lazarus. When He is most human then is He to us most Divine. The wealth of His heart was concentrated in those tears. “Jesus wept.” How unlike God, yet how very like man. We never feel Jesus nearer and in fuller sympathy with us than when we mingle together our tears by the open grave. We constantly thank God that we

have seen Jesus near the grave before nearing the grave ourselves. Indeed, if we had not heard and believed the words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," we never could have left the spot where our dear ones are buried, or dried our tears. Mary was never nearer Heaven than when she wept by the new tomb of Joseph. The most pathetic scene of life is when friends stand weeping around the grave of one they love. The grave is a softer bed, and the chill of death is taken away by the warmth of the tears of love. We thank Thee, Jesus, for Thy tears. Now we know that Thou dost love us and are sure that Thou dost sympathize with us in all our suffering and sorrow. Indeed, to die and enter the grave is not so hard a task if Jesus will but weep by our grave and watch over it. "Jesus wept" because the myriad graves of humanity in all ages, with all the heart-aches and the sufferings which they implied, passed before Him. Mary wept because she had lost her best friend, but her sorrow was turned to joy by the grave of Jesus, and she was made strong thereby to stand by other graves. Verily, the only preparation to stand by the grave and to enter the silent sepulchre is to wait, like Mary, weeping by the grave of Jesus, until we behold the risen Lord. When we understand the miracle of the Resurrection, death

will lose its sting and the grave its victory. I am glad that His grave was in a garden, and that it was in a garden He was first found after His resurrection. It seems so natural to meet Him there. It was in a garden He died through self-sacrifice and secured the Victor's crown. In a garden He was buried and entered into His well-earned, triumphant rest. In a garden he "rose again from the dead." I love the grave in the garden, and although the poet says there is no garden without its grave, yet I am glad to think that every grave may be in a garden. I like to think of Him, sleeping there, with beautiful flowers surrounding His grave, everything so sweet and fragrant, so pure and peaceful. Never was garden so rich or full of life before, for buried in its heart was the Lord of Life. The earth, with its grave, is evermore a garden beautiful in which the Saviour has slept. The Garden of Gethsemane and the garden of the grave, the garden of suffering and the garden of rest, the garden of death and the garden of life, correspond so closely that I fain would believe they are the same. Am I mistaken? Then let me alone. The thought is my own and my heart is full of rest. It was very natural that Mary should have mistaken Jesus for the gardener. We always meet Him in Nature's Paradise, dressing

and keeping it. Yea, we can always find Him in the garden, especially like Mary, in the early morning, opening the eyelids of the lily, training the trees, giving fresh beauty to the flowers and clothing the rose in fragrant and royal robes. Let us meditatively and devoutly stand in Nature's garden, and though a grave be near us, yet shall we see the risen Lord.

Home.—This is another place where the Saviour was found after His resurrection, amid a family circle, sitting at the table, partaking of their humble evening meal. How suggestive and beautiful. He joined two sad and solitary disciples in their quiet meditative walk, and conversed with them on the burning question of the day. They listened to His wondrous words with rapt attention; His voice was so magnetic, His thoughts so lucid, His sympathy so sincere and sacred, and His method of dealing with the whole question so new and enrapturing, that they had reached their destination unknown to themselves. They had more insight into theology in that short walk than they had ever possessed before. How their hearts burned within them with admiration, reverence and love—yet they knew Him not. But when they had entered the home and sat at table, “in the breaking of bread,” then they *knew* Him. How very precious is the truth taught

here! We have often met Him in our walks in the fields of theology, and though we were always made glad by His heavenly thoughts on human themes, and were charmed by His message of love, yet we knew Him not. But in the every-day experiences of life, in the Galilee of humiliation and suffering, in the sanctity of home, our eyes were opened and we knew Him. It is always so. He is known best not in theology, but in the simple yet sublime manifestation of love. When He approaches nearest us as a man, then do we realize how Divine He is. Thank God, we have oft seen Him in the "breaking of bread," and in the act of blessing and giving bread to man. We have met Him in many a humble yet holy home, and though the house spoke of poverty, yet the tenant, made rich in grace, would reveal unto us the wealth of divine love. We saw Jesus in every smile and heard His voice in every speech or song, while the very air breathed His presence, and we realized that we were near Heaven while yet in the home. We have seen more of Christ's glory and felt more of His gracious power, when witnessing the sweet submission and patience manifested in the midst of sorrow and suffering in these homes, than when worshipping in the most magnificent temple. The unpretentious and yet entirely consecrated lives of these

noble men of God, who are making home a Heaven and earth a Paradise, are so transparent that we can see God through them.

Upper Chamber.—This is another place where Jesus was found. The disciples had gathered together for meditation and prayer in a lowly room where probably the last supper was eaten. Oh how sacred was that room! It was ever so since first they met in it, but much more so now, after the Master's death. Losing Jesus intensified their love for everything connected with Him. They never knew the depth of their love for Jesus until they lost Him in death. As their love deepened for the Master, so did their appreciation for all things made sacred through contact with Him. That room was of special interest, and everything that had occurred therein was indelibly impressed upon their souls. Glorious pictures of the pathetic scenes of the past with which it is closely identified hang on memory's walls. They are reminded by all the surroundings of that room of the lessons of love they learned therein. The air in that room is full of the music of the last hymn they sang together, before going out to the garden of suffering. The very walls seem proud to echo the voice of Jesus. Jesus sang as well as wept. The value of His tears is increased by the sweetness of His song; the sweetness of His

song is enhanced by the bitterness of His tears. The capacity for pleasure and pain, singing and sighing, is the same. The greater the spirit's sensibility to joy, the more sensitive it is to sorrow. Thus it was Christ's great power to appreciate the pleasures of life, which gives pathos to the name "Man of Sorrows." It was because He could sing that He could weep. No one loved music with equal passion to Christ, for no one could appreciate it so well. He is the inspiration of all music. He composed the song which the morning stars sang together. He created the sublime symphony of the solar system. Indeed, the innumerable worlds are only strings in the golden harp of the universe. The birds that sing so sweetly had their voices trained by Him and learned their song from Him, whose name is full of music and whose nature is brimful of the harmony of holiness. When He came to the world He was seeking to strike again, on the organ of the universe, the "Lost Chord." He died, apparently, with His hope unrealized. But when He arose from the dead, and stood in that memorable room and said, "Peace be unto you," He struck the chord, and it has vibrated ever since with marvelous melody, filling the souls of men with the harmony of love and the rhythm of life. It holds the angels enraptured and its melody

moves and charms God until He joins in the chorus, His joy being so great that "He rests in His love and rejoices . . . with singing." It is ever thus. Music is the shortest, speediest, safest, smoothest way to soar to the heart of God. The resurrection is the keynote of the anthem of the redeemed, and the soul of all true music. Music, however, does not always express itself in song. It is, rather, harmony of being with the Divine, the rhythm of soul in service, and the melody of heart in communion with Holiness. Wherever this music of soul exists, this sweet song of spirit, this music of grace in man's moral movement, the risen Lord is near indeed. The disciples were thus engaged in earnest worship, united in pleading for divine light and guidance amidst the spiritual conflict between hope and fear; hope because of the dawning of the Resurrection truth upon their souls, and fear lest their hope be ill founded. The struggling and striving of soul for supremacy over harassing doubt, and pleading for divine strength, is always the sweetest music to the Divine ear, and the risen Lord does then appear. Thank God, we have found Him in the service of the sanctuary. Though the temple outside be old and mean, in the simple but earnest prayer, in the hallowed devotion of heart, in the sweet communion of spirit with God, in the songs

of Zion, the Lord has stood oft in our midst and said, "Peace be unto you." Thus, the risen Lord is found among the living—in the Garden of Nature, like the Creator, sanctifying toil; in the home, like a father, supplying wants and sanctifying trial; in the church, like the Saviour, sanctifying by His presence and inspiring words of love, the service of soul. Wherever there is a soul in sorrow, as in the Garden; soul in solitude and suffering, as in the home; soul in service, as in the Upper Chamber, the risen Lord is there indeed. Jesus is often unsought where found. Even had the disciples believed the Resurrection, with their conception of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, they would have expected to find Him on the throne of David, rather than in a Garden; in the palace of the king, partaking of royal feasts, rather than in the humble home of the poor; presenting Himself in the temple and joining in its grand ritualistic service, rather than in the unadorned service of the Upper Chamber. Is it not ever thus? We expect to find Jesus in the great things of life removed far away from us, while in truth He is not to be found there, but in the small things that are near to us, in our every-day experiences, in the silent tear, in the sweet song, in the sigh. He is not in the earthquake, nor in the wind, but in the "still, small

voice." Jesus had to appear,—manifest Himself to the disciples before they knew Him, and that for one reason—because He was unexpected and unsought where found. Mary did not know Him in the garden; He had to speak before He was known. The disciples at Emmaus, though they conversed with Him, knew Him not until He "opened their eyes." He was hardly expected in the Upper Chamber, for the doors were locked, and when He appeared they took Him for a spirit. Be it remembered, however, that Christ never reveals Himself unless there be a desire to see Him, and a search, though blind, for Him. Search is always the proof of desire to see, and every sincere search will ultimately be rewarded with sight. Thus no one need fail to find Jesus. The Holy Spirit is ever present as the all-sufficient Guide to the risen Lord. Thus we have learned that Jesus is often unfound where sought, and unsought where found. This brings us to our last division—

III. SUCCESS OF FAILURE.

He was found where unsought, because sought where unfound. The disciples failed to find Jesus in the grave and this failure was the greatest success of their life. They found the living Christ, because they failed to find the dead Jesus. Because

they sought Him where they did not find Him, they found Him where they did not seek Him. No one sincerely seeks Jesus but will ultimately succeed in finding Him, but no one will ever find Jesus unless he sincerely seek Him. Whoever finds Jesus must do so through the grave.

The death of Christ proved the death of many a faith. So must the Resurrection of Christ be the life of every faith. Christianity is said to be founded on an empty tomb. This is only true in the sense that the empty tomb stands for the fact of the Resurrection. Nothing but a living Saviour can be the head of a living Church. If Christ did not rise from the dead, He never could be the Saviour of the world. We do not mean to say that Christ's Divinity rests for proof on the Resurrection alone, but we do assert that faith in the Resurrection alone will explain and account for the Church, and moreover the fact of the Resurrection alone can make salvation possible. Thus the Resurrection of Christ is the foundation fact of Christianity. Every Christian believes in the Miracle of the Resurrection and his life is an ever-present and convincing proof that Christ "rose from the dead." All Christians say, "Christ is risen from the dead, whereof we are all witnesses." A living Christian is the most convincing witness and indestructible evidence that Christ

liveth. The disciples expected to keep Jesus out of the grave, then they expected to keep Him in the grave, but at length learned to keep Him in spite of the grave. Yea verily, because of the grave are they enabled to keep Him. These are but necessary stages in the development of faith and the deepening of spiritual life. They who lose Jesus because of the grave must find Him through the grave. Follow Him into the grave, then you lose Him; follow Him out of the grave, then you shall find Him. This is one and, in truth, the only way of finding the Messiah. They who seek the living among the dead find nothing but the empty tomb, but they secure there the necessary guidance and inspiration to find the living Christ. It is impossible to find Jesus but in this wise. He is within the grave to the disciple when he stands without; He is without the grave when the disciple stands within. But as soon as love leads him into the grave, life leads him out to Jesus. When we fail to see Him in the grave, alone shall we succeed in seeing Him out of the grave. All who lose Jesus in the grave do so in sorrow, and the reason thereof is unbelief. All who find Him through the empty grave do so with joy, and the reason thereof is faith. They are sorrowful because they lose Him out of the grave, but ultimately they are made glad

that they lost Him in and out of the grave. Thus, their greatest loss turns out to be their greatest gain. He who conscientiously seeks Jesus among the dead will ultimately find Him — among the living, for God always rewards every sincere search for the Saviour with success. Thus, seeking Christ, even among the dead, is better than not to seek Him anywhere, for by the empty tomb we secure visions and the guidance of angels into the mysteries of the resurrection and to the living Christ. To those disciples who sought Him in the grave first appeared Jesus, and that in the order in which they came. Mary was the first at the sepulchre and the first to see Jesus; John seems to have been the second, and the first without seeing Jesus to believe the Resurrection. Thus is faithful devotion and conscientious search rewarded of God with realization of truth. The one need of the world to-day is to behold the living Christ, and it is fast becoming convinced of this fact. We are glad to believe that there are thousands of men who are earnestly seeking Christ, though they know it not, and though they are seeking Him where He is not to be found — among the dead. The work of the church to-day is to stand by the empty tomb and echo the words of the angels, "He is not here, but is risen." Show the world the way to the Saviour. We can not do this unless

we ourselves have found Him. Do we believe that He is risen, and have we seen the risen Lord? Yea thank God, we have seen Him in the garden, the paradise of life; in the home, the paradise of purity; in the church, the paradise of piety, and in Heaven, the paradise of the peace of God. Thus we exchanged doubt for faith, despair for hope, death for life, and safely passed with the disciples through the discipline of the night into the clear light of day; from starlight to sunlight, and from sunlight to God-light. We bask in the light of the noonday sun of faith, for "He is risen." We are clothed with joy and gladness, as the lily is clothed with beauty and purity. We are fanned by the balmy breezes of Zion and breathe love in the atmosphere of Heaven, for "He is risen." Our souls are beautified with the beams of God's holiness, and illuminated with the radiant smile of His countenance, for "He is risen." We are filled with the wisdom of God, for we have the "Mind of Christ." We are nourished by God's love, for Christ dwelleth in our hearts. We feel secure in every storm, our home is the eternal heart of God and our life is hid with Christ in Him, for "He is risen." Our inheritance is infinite wealth. "All things are ours,"—light, love, life, for "He is risen." "When Christ our life shall appear, then shall we also ap-

pear with Him in glory." Arrayed in lustre bright, clothed in garments of light, we shall rise into the higher life of holiness in Heaven, for "He is risen."

FAITH'S FAITHFUL FOUNDATION.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."—I TIM. I: 15.

Without controversy, Saul of Tarsus, previous to his conversion, was Christianity's most potent antagonist in the first, or indeed in any century of the Christian era. He was a man who would be great in any age and successful in any sphere. To him all service worthy to be undertaken was sacred. Every cause that arrested his attention and enlisted his sympathy received the strong support of his sanguine and staunch spirit. He entered into all service with a sturdy, self-reliant, self-assertive and self-sacrificing spirit. His liberal education, majestic mind, spiritual strength, and social status combined to make him a choice champion to any cause. His fervency, fearlessness and fidelity made him a resistless force and a relentless foe. He possessed a mighty intellect and a magnetic master-mind, which had received the highest culture. His eagle

eye, heroic heart, brawny backbone, invulnerable integrity, imperial intuition and intellectual insight, made him a born leader—a mighty mental and moral magnet, drawing to himself all similar spirits to engage in the same service. He was unflinching and uncompromising in the fulfillment of what he understood to be his duty. His pluck, prudence, patriotism, perseverance and piety made him a powerful personality. He was convinced that Christ was an impostor, Christianity an imposition, and true to his own nature, honest to his convictions, he employed all his time and talents to rid the world of the fanatic folly and fraud of Christianity. No man could have undertaken to do more to uproot Christianity and to annihilate its influence than did Saul of Tarsus. It is imperative that we bear these things in mind in order to be able to appreciate fully his testimony concerning the truthfulness of the Gospel and the triumph of gospel truth. Had Saul remained an enemy, the skeptics of the world would have found in his attitude and enmity an all-sufficient answer and justification for their antagonism to Christianity, and surely it would have been a strong stand and support for skepticism. We can not but have confidence in men of Saul's type, on whatever side they may be found fighting. We instinctively place more confidence

in an intelligent, conscientious, inquiring infidel, than we do in a believer who has not courage nor conscience to challenge any claim, nor interest and intelligence enough to investigate independently the credentials of Christianity. The honest opposition of a conscientious unbeliever will ultimately be of greater service to the cause of Christ than the support of believers who have neither dared to think nor dared to doubt. Let Christians learn to look upon conscientious challenges to the claims of Christianity as choice champions of its cause. Truth must ultimately triumph, and all who sincerely seek spiritual truth will inevitably succeed in finding it, and gladly embrace it when found. Christianity's greatest enemy is the man who stifles investigation and smothers conviction, whether in himself or in others. To all such, the testimony of Saul as to the truthfulness of the Gospel is weightless and worthless, but to all sincere seekers after truth, whether believers or unbelievers, it is simply invaluable. Of all men who have ever lived, the best qualified to judge Christianity was Saul of Tarsus. He possessed greater qualifications to test the truthfulness, to value the evidences and to give an impartial verdict on the veracity of the Gospel, than any other. His preparation of head and heart is unquestioned, his

heroism and integrity unchallenged. Even enemies are forced to recognize in Saul an unbiased investigator, holding supremely the gifts necessary to pass an opinion on Faith's Foundation. He lived in the first century, and had access to all the historical records. If any fraud had been practiced or any weakness existing in the chain of evidences, no one was more favorably situated to discover it or possessed greater incentive to expose it when found, than did Saul. Apart from his natural love of truth, gladly would he have welcomed any damaging evidence against Christianity, as a vindication of the attitude he held toward it. He was an eye-witness of the life of the first disciples, and was well versed in their teaching. He possessed every advantage of noting the change the new faith wrought in the lives of the believers and of comparing their practice with their profession. He understood thoroughly the national temperament, was in sympathy with the national aspirations, and devoted to the faith of his fathers. He was well versed concerning the Messianic hope, had studied as thoroughly as any one the prophecies which formed the foundation of that hope, and possessed every advantage possible to compare in detail the word, works and life of Jesus with the promised Christ of prophecy. Starting out as an enemy, he was certainly not prej-

judiced in favor of Christianity but was predisposed against it. All must concede that nothing but firm faith in the truthfulness of the Gospel could tempt Saul to embrace it. Not only had he nothing to gain, but, from a worldly standpoint, he had everything to lose in accepting it. Nevertheless, possessing all these advantages to test the trustworthiness of the claims of Christianity, he testified, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." He was converted to Christianity and became one of the staunchest supporters of Christian truth, the strongest advocate of Christian doctrine, while his whole life from his conversion to his death was the noblest exemplification of the truthfulness of the Gospel. To him the Gospel was true, not only as a history and a doctrine, but as the only power to save the world. Thus the best qualified to test the foundation of faith furnishes the world with the highest possible testimony of its faithfulness. This brings us to our subject—*Faith's Faithful Foundation*.

The apostle emphasizes three truths in the text which are vital to Christianity and form the foundation of faith.

I. THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE GOSPEL
AS A HISTORICAL FACT.

“Jesus Christ came into the world.” Concerning this greatest fact of all history, no alternative is possible to man save to accept as a “faithful saying.” All men capable of belief have faith in the historic Jesus. Regarding the broad lines of the life of Christ, such as the birth of Bethlehem, the immaculate character, incomparable life and the matchless majesty of the death of Calvary, all men declare “faithful saying.” The historical records relative to the life of Jesus are invulnerable in their argument and undeniable in their proof that Christ Jesus came into the world. The evidences of Christ’s presence in the world are so unquestionably true that whoever denies the fact dethrones his reason, and, if consistent, will be forced to reject the everything of history and the history of everything. But the presence of Christ in the world is an established fact. Paul claims, moreover, not only that Jesus was in the world but that Christ “came” into the world. This implies His prehistoric existence and embraces the great doctrine of the Incarnation. This is the fundamental doctrine of faith. Christianity rests on this fact. Reason, revelation and religion make the Incarna-

tion imperative. Without the Incarnation, without revelation ; without revelation, without religion. Therefore, reason declares that if this foundation fact be not found firmly and faithfully established, that the whole fabric of faith must inevitably fall. The prevalence of the religious instinct in man, and the existence of a universal need, which nothing less than God revealed in flesh could satisfy, necessitate belief in the Incarnation.

It is necessary to believe with Paul that Jesus is the Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, before faith in Him as a Saviour is possible. If proof of His Divinity is not accessible to man, and sufficient to convince an unbiased, sincere seeker of its truthfulness, then He is not the Son of God. No man need hesitate to test this truth, and he who hesitates is less than a man. But whoever tests faithfully and fearlessly will sooner or later stand with Paul on the firm rock of Faith, and say, " Faithful Saying." Immanuel invites and inspires independent, intelligent, impartial inquiry. He who refuses to receive the doctrine of the Incarnation, and thus recognize the Divine and the human in Jesus, will either be forced to lose his bearings amidst the mental maze and bewildering labyrinth of unbelief, or compelled to cut his way inch by inch from the dungeon of doubt to the freedom of faith. We

must believe in His existence in the world, and His existence before He came into the world, or be overwhelmed by the inexplicable difficulties of doubt. If we deny Christ's coming into the world, how will we account for the fact that He is the center of history, and that everything that ever took place in the world has its historic position determined by its approach to, or remoteness from, the great central fact—Jesus Christ? Is it probable that the axis of human history, or the sun from which radiate and to which converge all the light and energy of life, around which center, cluster and revolve in a rich galaxy the innumerable facts and factors of the world's history, is only a myth or only a man? "Christ Jesus came into the world." If He did not, how can we account for the Gospels as records and as results? They are in the world, and they demand recognition. If we deny the Incarnation, it is simply impossible to account for the New Testament. He who rejects the Incarnation, which is a mystery of light, will be compelled to accept the self-evident contradiction that fancies are more potent than facts, which is a mystery of darkness. The Gospels must be true or false. They chronicle facts or fancies, and it ought to be easy to decide which. As records, they are authentic or spurious. If authentic, then Jesus Christ

“came into the world.” But if spurious, how are we going to explain their existence and the existence of belief in their authenticity? It is not within the limits of human credulity to believe that the men who wrote the Gospels would chronicle as facts things they knew to be mere fabrications, and force them upon their fellow men as faithful records, when they had nothing to gain and everything to lose in so doing. There could be no motive to fraud. If spurious, why were they written? How did it happen that men of different mental caliber, in different places, at different times, without any possibility of collusion, should have written from different standpoints the same statements and story? The Gospel records are in all essentials identical, and we know that truth alone is homogeneous. Moreover, if spurious, how will we account for the fact that for over eighteen centuries they have been accepted as true by men of unquestionable intelligence and undeniable integrity? Yea, by the best men in every sense of the word that have ever lived; men endowed with every faculty and possessing every facility to rightly estimate the evidences of the truthfulness of the Gospel. These men not only accepted the Gospel records as true, but many of them suffered persecutions, risked their lives and sealed their belief with their blood. If spurious, then by

universal consent the sublimest ethical teaching, the greatest moral truth, the mightiest factor in the uplifting of humanity is—a lie. The power which makes for righteousness is—unrighteousness; the world's Magna Charta of liberty, law and life is—the fruit of fraud and fanaticism. The power which educates, emancipates, elevates and ennobles humanity is—superstition and deception. Reason unites with revelation in declaring “Faithful is the saying . . . Christ Jesus came into the world,” for without Christ, and without Christ in the world, and without a Christ not of the world, the Gospels are simply enigmas of errors. Like alone can produce like. Hell can not bring forth Heaven. A lie can not lead to truth, neither can it make men true. Reason asserts that the cause must be as great, or greater, than the effect. The Gospels present an effect which demands a supernatural power for its cause. The Gospels demand Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ demands belief in the Incarnation. If Christ came not into the world, then the greatest moral superstructure is without foundation, the greatest system of truth has been evolved out of error and has systematized itself. The hero who has inspired thousands of heroes to deeds of holy heroism is only the creation of hallucination. Such a conception of Christianity is the consummation of contradiction.

With Paul, all Christendom unites in declaring, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance — that Christ Jesus came into the world."

II. THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE GOSPEL
AS A DOCTRINAL FACT.

"Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*." This includes faith, not only in Christ's presence in the world, but in His mission. To Paul, Christ was in the world in order to save it. Of all doctrine, the doctrine of salvation is the most important to humanity and vital to the Christian faith. It can not be measured by anything save the love of God. It embraces Christ's cradle and His Cross, the Incarnation and Atonement, both of which are based on the truth that Jesus is the Messiah. Many who believe in the historic Jesus deny His divine nature and necessarily reject His divine mission. Paul, however, could not understand the life and death of Jesus Christ save in the light of "to save sinners," for to deny the truthfulness of His mission in the world is to deny Christ. This doctrine of salvation is fundamental. It is the first and final fact of faith. Without it the Christian faith would be without foundation, and the faith that is without foundation is the worst form of folly and fanaticism. The everything of Christ is invested in Christianity.

The everything of Christianity is invested in—salvation. If the doctrine of salvation can not be established, then both Christ and Christianity must necessarily become inexplicable and extinct. But if established, Christ is enthroned and Christianity is eternal. This doctrine being the very foundation of faith, it is of the utmost importance to know if it be faithful. Is the doctrine of salvation provable, or even probable? Is it possible to test its truthfulness? Paul replies that it is a “faithful saying.” This implies conviction and confidence born of careful consideration of its claims. If it is faithful, there must be a way of proving its faithfulness. It is impossible to believe that the doctrine which is most essential to the happiness, hope and Heaven of humanity is incapable of proof or insufficiently proven. Let not, however, any man expect to be able to explain everything in connection with this doctrine, for like God it must necessarily be mysterious, as mysteries are essential to faith. The function of faith is to follow when reason fails. Though faith can not accept that which is denied by reason, yet it can accept that which reason, unaided, fails to recognize. Moreover, if faith accepted as facts only things that reason has indisputably demonstrated, then there would be no faith. So, while believing that there are irrefutable arguments and

undeniable proofs of the doctrine of salvation accessible to every man, yet the most learned and devout minds must not affect to comprehend it. Let every man approach it with all possible modesty and humility, realizing that the grandest conception of the Infinite Mind and the sublimest expression of the divine Heart must forever remain greater and more glorious than the greatest and most glorious thoughts of the greatest minds concerning it.

Nevertheless, the doctrine must be such that every mind can more or less appreciate it. Christ's mission in the world was "to save sinners." This does not imply, however, that He would have had no mission in a sinless world. Salvation, in its broadest sense, would be necessary if sin had never existed, and the Saviour would have come to the world had man never sinned. The Incarnation would have been a divine and human necessity had man remained innocent. It would have been necessary Godward, because it is the most intelligent and invincible expression of divine love, which can not but manifest itself. It was necessary to the nature and purposes of the Creator, because it is the most sublime manifestation of the former and the only successful realization of the latter. Love's best is imperative to the best love, and the best of love is the revelation of the best love at its best. Thus

the Incarnation would have been essential in a sinless world, because it was imperative to the law, liberty and life of divine love. It would have been necessary manward because the best in man could not be at its best until it had seen, at its best, the best in God. None other than the highest manifestation of God would have been sufficient to equip man for his highest mission. The only hope of the human to realize the highest holiness is through the highest revelation of holiness in Him who is and makes holy. The Incarnation was necessary to man had sin not existed, because Godliness is the goal of humanity, and the Incarnation is the genius and the Genesis of Godliness. Jesus, the God-man, is the genius of God's grace to make man God-like. God's ideal man could never have been realized but for the inspiration man received from God's ideal, eminent in Emmanuel. Thus, though the accident of sin may have determined the form of the Incarnation, yet the Incarnation as a fact and function is uninfluenced by it because indispensable and eternal. The Incarnation must ever have remained the most invincible impulse of Divine Love, and the most imperative inspiration of human life. Not only would the Incarnation be necessary in a sinless world, but in its wider sense salvation would be necessary had man never sinned. Salvation

means not only to be saved from sin, but to be saved from all imperfection and the possibility to sin. Had man remained innocent, he would be still imperfect, and if imperfect, in need of salvation. Salvation in its fullest meaning is absolute conformity to the image of God, and this sanctification is impossible without a Saviour to save from all temptation to sin. But whatever the influence and the function of the Incarnation might have been in a sinless world, we know that its function in a sinful world is "to save sinners." This is what the Apostle claims Christ came into the world to accomplish; "to save"—the soul from individual sin, and the race from collective sin. The doctrine of salvation, in its specific sense, involves the idea of sin. If there were no sin in the world and no guilt because of sin, then this Scriptural doctrine of salvation would be meaningless. But the universal sense of sin, and the earnest efforts of universal man to atone for his sins and appease his conscience proves this to be, involving as it does the glory of God and the well-being of man, of all doctrines the most important. There is a universal acknowledgment of the need of salvation, and this in itself suggests the possibility of salvation. Let us inquire what kind of salvation is the need of humanity. It must be salvation from sinning; not only from the guilt of

sin but from the influence of sin; redeeming not only from the penalty and punishment but also from the power of sin. The salvation necessary is physical and moral, saving the body and the soul, and that not only from sin but from all evil—the outcome of sin. It must not only be salvation in time but for eternity, and not only great enough for the soul of the individual but for the need of the whole world. Now, the question to be decided, and which is fundamental to faith, is this: Is the historic Jesus whom the Apostle proves “came to the world” the Saviour of humanity? Has He power to save the world? Is He willing to save the world? Does He save the world? These questions lie at the foundation of faith, and on the answers and proofs depends the Faithfulness of the Gospel as a Doctrinal Fact. Jesus Christ professes to be the Son of God who came to the world for the express purpose of saving sinners. If the claim of His divine nature can be established, then the trustworthiness of His testimony as to His own mission is irrefutable, so that the whole argument turns on the question, “Is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God?” If He is the Son of God, then is He the only and all-efficient Saviour of the world. Who is this Jesus? But one of two answers to us seems possible; the Son of God, or the greatest impostor of the world. It

ought to be easy to decide which. Does He speak like an impostor? Men say, "Never man spake like this man." His words are universally recognized as the wisest and holiest that have ever fallen on the ear of man. His authority, originality and spirituality as a Teacher have ever astonished the master minds of the ages. Rich and poor, learned and unlearned have for nineteen centuries, in sunshine and in storm, been charmed by His words of love. The truths which He declared have revolutionized the world; they have ever been the mightiest force for making man noble, kind and true. They have emancipated man and enthroned woman. They have set a premium on purity, peace and piety. They have influenced for good every man who has honored them. They have found their way into the hearts of myriads of men; they have moulded and moved every mind and furnished the motive for every good movement since they have been uttered. They are the perennial spring from whence floweth the philanthropy and the love of man. Are they then the words of an impostor? Did He live like an impostor? He "went about doing good." He is universally acknowledged to be the greatest philanthropist of the world. He gave eyes to the blind, healed the bodies of men, raised the dead, while He never sought or received

reward. Even His enemies can not point to a single flaw in His character or a single selfish act in His life. Thousands of men, the best the sun has ever looked down upon, have received their inspiration from His life and are living again His life of love. His life has influenced the head and the heart of humanity and made men generous, great and good. Thousands have "gone home" to glory, like Elijah, in a chariot of fire, rather than deny their indebtedness to His life. Is this the result of the life of an impostor? Did He die like an impostor? Are impostors willing to die to immortalize the impositions they have forced on their fellows? Is His serenity of soul and calm courage in the agony of death the creation of imposition? Does He, while promising Paradise as a reward to the penitent thief and praying for forgiveness for His cruel murderers, show the spirit of an impostor? If an impostor, how will we explain the influence of His death on humanity? No fact has so moved men, and the effect of no death has been so universal, gaining in magnetism and might as the centuries have moved on. If He is not the Son of God, then the life and death of Christ are inexplicable. Moreover, it is impossible to explain the miracle of the Resurrection if Jesus is not the Son of God, or to explain the empty tomb without accepting the

miracle of the Resurrection. All are agreed that the body of Jesus was buried in a new tomb hewn out of a rock and that a large stone was placed at the door of the sepulchre, which was sealed with the Roman seal and guarded by Roman soldiers. We know that it was sure death for any one to tamper with that grave while it was under the seal and protection of Rome. There was only one access to that sepulchre; we know that the body was not in the grave on the morning of the third day. And now being positive of two facts, we are forced to account for the third. We are all agreed that He was buried in that tomb, and that His body disappeared from the tomb. We are forced, therefore, to account for the disappearance of the body from the grave. Only one of three explanations is possible: First, His enemies removed the body; Second, His friends removed it, or Third, He "rose again from the dead." Why should His enemies remove the body? All their hope for annihilating the influence of Jesus depended upon its safe keeping, and, moreover, if they possessed anywhere the body of Jesus, why in the name of common sense did they not produce it when the disciples preached the Resurrection, and thus present an unanswerable and permanent proof of the fallacy of the Christian faith? That they would have done so, had it been possible, is proved

beyond all question by the persistency with which they prosecuted their project of crushing Christianity in crucifying Christ. It was absolutely impossible for friends to have removed the body without the knowledge of the soldiers guarding the tomb. Moreover, conscious and criminal conspiracy between friends and foes, culminating in removing the body and hiding it and the detestable and dark deed never to be discovered nor disclosed, is incredible. No sane mind can a moment believe that the disciples would have sacrificed their all, yea their lives, to convince the world that Jesus rose from the dead if they knew His body was rotting in an unknown grave. Their deception could mean nothing but disgrace and death. Therefore, reason rejects as unsatisfactory these two explanations of the removal of the body of the Redeemer. These are practically the only two attempts of unbelief to solve the mystery of the empty tomb. There is, then, no alternative but to believe with all Christendom that "He rose again from the dead," and that the miracle of the Resurrection is the doctrine that has created the church, and not a doctrine that the church has created. The fact of Christ's resurrection being established, the truth of His divine nature can nevermore be denied. He could not be deceived as to His Divinity if He rose again from

the dead. We can not be deceived regarding His Messiahship, now that He has demonstrated His authority over death and the grave. He can not be less than Divine, He must be the Son of God, and as such His words must be faithful and His testimony true. He asserts that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Therefore, the doctrine of salvation is firmly and faithfully founded on the foundation of all doctrine—the Divine Sonship of Christ. He came to "seek and save that which was lost," or in the words of Paul, "to save sinners." The Gospel is true as a doctrinal fact. Christianity is the power of God unto salvation. Thank God, He came into the world "to save sinners." Not to build churches nor create creeds, but "to save sinners." This was the mighty motive of the mission of the Son of Man among men. Millions of men on earth believe this truth, and while ready to die for their faith, join with the myriad hosts of the redeemed in Heaven, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." This is a "faithful saying—that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

III. THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE GOSPEL AS AN EXPERIMENTAL FACT.

“Of whom I am chief.” The most indestructible evidence of the trustworthiness of Christianity is the testimony of individual experience. Christianity is well attested by a variety of evidence which ought to appeal clearly and conclusively to all classes and conditions of men. The same evidence will not appeal to all minds with equally convincing force. But the experimental evidences are well-nigh irresistible in their appeal at all times to all men. This is the proof of proofs. Paul had tested Christianity and found it verified in his own life as “the power of God unto salvation.” He may have been convinced of the truthfulness of the Gospel because of its faithfulness as a historical and doctrinal fact, but after all the argument of argument was that he himself, the chief of sinners, was being saved. It is claimed that Christianity is Christianity only to the Christian. There is certainly one sense in which this is true. No man can appreciate Christianity until he embrace it. No man will realize its strength until he lays his weight upon it, or understand its influence until he experiences it in his own life. This practical test of Christianity is the most potent, accessible and permanent proof

of its power. While many men are unable to test Christianity by logic, all men can test it by life. It is a marvelous thing, however, that those who are most dependent upon this proof are so slow in recognizing and appreciating its power. Paul had taken Christ at His word and trusted Him for his life, and the Saviour's faithful fulfillment of all His promises to Paul, amidst all the changes of his changeful career, established him eternally in his conviction that Jesus is the Christ. His faith had become a part of his very nature and was indestructible. Paul, to himself and to all others, would ever be an unsolved problem were Christianity not true. There are millions of men confident that Jesus is the Saviour of the world who are ready, if needs be, to die for their faith. These men, unless Jesus is the Christ, are inexplicable. Their belief has revolutionized their characters. They are men of intelligence and integrity. Without controversy they are, as a class, the most honest, hopeful, happy, and humane of men. What will we do with their testimony? We can not disregard it, neither can we destroy it. Are these men deceived, or do they deceive? Is it not improbable that the best men, in every sense of the word, that have ever been in the world should alone have been thus deceived? Is it not incredible that the most rational men should

on this point alone become irrational? No single motive to fraud can be found. Reason dare not call these men deceivers. The best proof of what Christianity is will always be what Christianity does, not what it professes, but what it practices. It is right and reasonable that it should be thus tried. If it is the only true religion it must bear unmistakable evidence in its history of that fact. It professes to have come unto the world to save the world. It has been here for eighteen centuries. What has it done toward realizing this purpose? Look around you and see. Scan the pages of history and you will undoubtedly find sufficient evidence to convince you whether Christianity is of God, or of man. You ought to find out which immediately, and as you are a man, take your position accordingly. If it is of man, you owe it to yourself, to society and to God to lend all your influence against it, convincing those who embrace it of their fanaticism and folly. Remember well, however, that you should believe as thoroughly that it is of man as do others that it is of God before you undertake to oppose it, lest you be found fighting against God. Unless you are as ready to die for your conviction as the Christians are, you dare not challenge it. But if you have arrived at this position, go ahead. On the other hand, if it is found to

be of God, you are in duty bound to embrace it and to lend all your influence to bring all its enemies to do the same. To refuse to investigate the claims of Christianity is criminal; to reject it when its claims have been established is cowardice. The sin which is most damaging to character and most dangerous to life is — indecision. The question Elijah put to Israel was never more pertinent than it is to-day — “How long halt ye between two opinions?” If Christianity is true, why do you not embrace it? It has created Christendom, the progress and prosperity of which are but the practical expression of the principles of the Prince of Peace. It has made slavery impossible. When it entered the world there were no hospitals, but to-day these charitable institutions, ameliorating the sufferings of humanity, are found everywhere. The greatest moral force in the world to lessen crime, sin, suffering, sorrow and shame, to uplift the fallen, to emancipate the oppressed, to ennoble the ignoble and to make the sinful holy, is by universal consent — Christianity. The testimony of the best men of the world is that it satisfies the best nature of the best men. Can that which does this be untrue? Can that which satisfies the longing of the universal heart with its answers to the deep questions that have harassed it be less than Divine? Must not that

which is declared by humanity, when at its best, to satisfy its best needs be the final religion of man? If true, why not accept it? The best evidence that any Christian can offer of the truthfulness of the Gospel is to manifest its influence on his own life. Many who could not offer an argument of any value in words, present an argument in life which is irresistible and invaluable. If you want to convince the world that the Gospel is true, manifest its influence on your own character and in your own life. Fire has failed to burn this conviction out of the soul of the martyrs, and swords have failed to drive men to deny it, because it is "A faithful saying." The Pharisees could argue the man born blind out of many a position, but no logic in the universe can argue a pair of eyes out of a man's head. Christianity's choice challenge to the criticism of the centuries is—the Christian. What can be more convincing or conclusive of Christianity's claim than the change in the characters of those who cherish it? The best sermon on the science of salvation is—a soul saved. While sinners are transformed into saints and the Gospel makes men Godlike, Christianity, in all that is essential to its life, is indestructible. Though every other tittle of evidence be lost, though all the Bibles be burned, though churches and creeds crumble, and the cosmos of theological thought become chaos, yet

while men are created into new creatures by Christ Jesus, Christianity is immortal. The most transcendent and telling testimony to the trustworthiness of the Gospel is the transforming tendency of its truth. Thus, of all appeals the appeal to experience is the strongest. Paul believed Christianity because it pointed out to him his sinful state, a sympathetic Saviour, a sufficient and sure salvation. He had proved it true in that it rightly diagnosed his disease, furnished the right remedy and realized the right results. This is what he means in saying, "Of whom I am chief." He realized that he was a sinner, and so great appeared his sin that he thought he was the "chief" of sinners, but the chief of sinners *saved*. His salvation as the "chief of sinners" provided him with his chief proof that it was a "faithful saying" that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." This must ever be so. While Christianity shows a man what he is, what he should be, and how he may become what he should, while it reveals a ruined race redeemed and unfailingly points to man's need of penitence, provides pardon and promotes piety and peace, it will forever remain the "power of God unto salvation." While Christianity's most essential evidence is the experimental, we thank God that Christianity itself is no experiment. It has been well tested. The

foundation of faith is a "tried stone." Friends have tried it and they have ever found it faithful. Enemies have scrutinized it but have failed to detect one flaw, and indirectly have been forced to acknowledge it as "faithful." Christianity is true as a historical fact, as a doctrinal fact, and as an experimental fact. Faith's Foundation is found firm, and our souls echo the words of the Apostle, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance." My soul, build thou on this foundation. There is no other that will stand the storms of time and the testing of eternity. My brother, accept this salvation. It is worthy of all acceptance; it satisfies the craving of the soul and meets the universal need of the universal heart. Every conversion proves it and Christendom demonstrates its power. The conscientiousness of Christians while living, their confidence while dying, and the change it has wrought in our own characters, make it imperative that we say, "faithful saying."

SIMEON AND THE SAVIOUR.

“ And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And he came by the spirit into the temple: And when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him after the custom of the law, then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.”—LUKE 2: 25-32.

No nation is poor that can produce a character like Simeon. Any people may glory in the possession of such strong, serene and spiritual sages. Such men are the “ chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof ”—the most efficient defense of the life and liberty of the nation. They crystallize the national ideals, concentrate the national energies, consolidate the national hope and constrain the national will. They create the national conscience and are

the champions of law, liberty and life. Any nation is immortal to the extent that it is able to produce such moral magnets. Simeon was one of the choicest fruits of the Old Dispensation in which the whole life of the tree seemed concentrated, which ripened only under the warm rays of the sun of righteousness. The Jewish Economy sang its last and sweetest song in Simeon, but like the fabled song of the swan, it was the song of death. In many particulars Simeon was the highest product of the Old Testament religion. He was an ideal Israelite. We possess only the fragmentary portion of his history contained in this chapter, yet we are charmed with what we are privileged to know of him, and instinctively feel drawn to him by the tenderest cords of love. History, like life, is to be valued not by its length, but by its breadth and depth. Moreover, any history that chronicles the last scene of life contains all that is necessary to enable us to understand the development of that life. Hence, the last chapter of any life is much more instructive than the first. The sun is never more magnificent than when it sets in the golden glory which it has prepared to adorn its eventide. He who is privileged to see the fruit of any tree may well know the beauty of its blossom, but he who sees a tree in blossom is never sure what the fruit will be, for many a tree

blossoms well on which fruit never grows. He who stands with Simeon in his last days and witnesses the high-water mark of his life may well know of the ebb and flow in his history. So that, although this story of a soul seeking the Saviour is incomplete, yet it is invaluable and immortal. The more spiritual the life, the more impossible it is to clothe it in language. The deeper flows the stream of life, the less there will be concerning it that words can tell. A great life is so unostentatious that men do not appreciate its greatness until its light has burned out. This short story of Simeon, the sainted sage, like all written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is sublime, simple, salutary and sufficient. It gives us the history of the transformation of an ideal Israelite into an ideal Christian. It is not only interesting and instructive as the history of an individual conversion, but as typical and first fruit of the rich harvest which will be gathered into the Heavenly Garner when the Jews as a nation accept Jesus as the Messiah. We like to remember that Simeon was permitted to see Jesus before the wise men were privileged to worship Him. A divine propriety is strongly implied in the order in which men came to do homage to the child Jesus. The shepherds were the first to come, then Simeon, then the wise men. Jews first, then Gentiles.

Peasant first, prophet second, priests third; labor first, law second, learning third. How natural is this order. The sons of toil—the shepherds—did homage to the Good Shepherd; Simeon, the ideal Israelite, saw the light of the Gentiles; the wise men from the East worshipped the King of the Jews. Labor was never more sacred or successful than when it sought, through the shepherds, the sympathy of the Saviour and identified itself with Him who had identified Himself with labor. Toil is only triumphant when in touch with truth. Ecclesiasticism was never more exalted than when, in the person of Simeon, it embraced Emmanuel. Theology and religiosity, the law and the prophets, were never so glorified as when, in the person of Simeon, they recognized, received and rejoiced in the Lord's Christ. Philosophy, science and culture were never so ennobled and enriched as when, in the person of the wise men, they fell at the feet of the "King of the Jews." Wisdom is never so wise as when it welcomes and worships Him who is the wealth of all wisdom. Whatever claim these wise men had to wisdom previous to this, they established it beyond all controversy when they allowed the star to lead them to the sun, and sought in the right spirit, in the right season and in the right sphere, for the Saviour. All classes and conditions meet

around the cradle of Christ as they do around His cross; the poor and rich, unlettered and learned, Jew and Gentile. They were all led by the Holy Ghost, though He employed different agents in guiding them. He led the shepherds through music, Simeon through Moses and the prophets, the wise men through the star. It is ever thus. The Spirit guides men to the Saviour through the strongest faculty of their being, whether it be for song, Scripture or science. In reality, neither art, revelation nor science have any value only as they lead men to the Saviour and do homage to Him who is their life and light; The three never rise higher than when at the feet of Jesus. While we are interested in all who were privileged to gather around the child Jesus, we are especially interested in Simeon. He seems to get into closer touch with Jesus, to interpret the child and understand the Incarnation, with its influence upon humanity and Heaven, as did none of the others. He alone saw the universal Saviour, who was not only the glory of the people of Israel, but "a light to the Gentiles." He alone understood that no corner or crevice of the moral world would be left destitute of the revealing, the purifying and the life-giving light of the sun of righteousness. He alone had a glimpse of the atoning work of the Redeemer and saw that the

King would only be crowned when crucified. All the light given in scattered rays to the prophets was gathered together in the soul of Simeon and focused on Christ. Simeon was in very truth a prophet. He saw with prophetic eye the mission of the Son of Man in the world and the opposition of the world to the Saviour. He saw the suffering of the Sinless on account of sin, and sought to make known the Saviour's sympathy for the sinner. Is not this ever the work of the prophet? It is interesting to note that the first intimation of his prophetic faculty is given when he beholds the Lord's Christ. Jesus Christ is the Genesis, as well as the goal of prophecy. We can not but feel grateful that the starlight of prophecy should lose its lustre only in the fulfillment of all prophecy—the rising of the sun of righteousness. What more natural than that the light of the stars should be lost only in the light of the sun? Starlight, however valuable in the night, is superfluous in the sunlight. But he who has not eyes to see the one can never behold the other. He who does not appreciate the light already received and is faithful to the truth already revealed can never receive a greater revelation. The joy of anticipation and the pleasure of seeking truth are imperative to the delight of realization. He who is appreciative of the knowledge already

possessed will inevitably be rewarded with greater knowledge. Simeon's nature was appreciative. He "waited for the consolation of Israel." He highly valued the truth already revealed, and diligently sought to qualify himself for the realization of the greater truth. He did not bemoan the disadvantages under which he lived, but earnestly sought to adapt himself to profit by greater privileges when it would please God to grant them. Thus he proved himself to be an ideal seeker for salvation. Indeed everything about him seems ideal. He possessed an ideal spirit, made an ideal search for the Saviour, which was crowned with ideal success. The story of Simeon teaches us the secret of success in seeking the Saviour, hence our subject—*Simeon and the Saviour*.

No one can but be impressed by Simeon's imposing personality, as portrayed by the Holy Spirit. His character is delineated with such delicacy and precision that we are able to read his very thoughts and to look into his very soul. This analysis of his character compresses the intimacy of years into the compass of an hour's communion. He who is privileged to look upon this picture, if but for a moment, can not fail to perceive that Simeon possessed pre-eminently all the essential qualifications of the seeker for salvation.

I. SIMEON AS A SEEKER.

Simeon is representative of that class of master minds who have made all the great discoveries of the world. He is typical of the honest inquirer and the successful seeker for truth. He was "just," that is, righteous in all his dealings, full of moral integrity and uprightness, a man not only honest in deed but honest in heart. He was impregnable in justice and the soul of sincerity. Honesty of heart, sincerity of spirit, are qualities ever imperative to successful research for all truth. He who is not honest would only mock truth, and "God is not mocked." He was not only "just," but "devout," that is, he humbled himself in the presence of holiness. He revered righteousness and trembled in the presence of truth. The Almighty filled him with awe; the Infinite and the Inscrutable inspired him with a sense of insignificance. He who pays no homage to holiness can never enter the Holy of Holies of the temple of truth. He who would enter the temple of truth, of nature or of grace must do so on his knees. God can not reveal Himself to the haughty; without humility as well as holiness no man can see the Lord. The Holy One ever holds communion with the humble of heart. There must ever be affinity between the seek-

er's spirit and the truth sought. He who is humbled in the presence of truth shall alone by truth be exalted. Arrogance in the realm of truth is arrested and annihilated by the arm of the Almighty. "The secrets of the Lord are with them that fear Him," and with them only. This fear is not only a condition on which God promises to reveal Himself, but a quality of spirit essential to understand and appreciate the things of God. A pure heart and a devout spirit are necessary qualifications to see God. Selfishness, self-sufficiency and sensuality will dim the spiritual sight and destroy the moral sensibility, which is imperative to spiritual vision. Sanctity of soul, sincerity of spirit and self-surrender are the three imperative conditions of spiritual sight. Simeon was "just and devout." Both qualities must ever meet in the soul of the successful seeker for truth. Honesty and humility are imperative conditions of successful investigation. A man may be just without being devout, honest without being humble, but he can not be devout without being just, humble without being honest. No man who is not honest and humble can make any great discovery; no man can be just and devout without getting into touch with truth and being transformed by the truth he touches. Simeon possessed this spirit, hence the Lord told him His secrets and enabled him

to make the greatest discovery of the world—to find the Messiah. Without this spirit no one can succeed in seeing the Saviour. To possess Simeon's spirit is the secret of success in seeing Simeon's Saviour. Simeon, like every successful seeker for truth, was right in relation to Heaven and earth, "devout" expressing his Godward and "just" his manward attitude. He faithfully observed the two great commandments which are the fulfillment of the law—loving God with his whole heart and his neighbor as himself. He learned of God that he might live aright, and worked wisely in the world because he had secured wisdom from on high. He humbled himself in the presence of holiness, and was therefore honored in the presence of humanity. He sought to understand and fulfill his duty Godward that he might be made a blessing manward. This complete character alone is crowned with special revelation of truth. The religion which completes the character, perfects our entire manhood and enables us to be right in all the relationships of life, is alone worthy to be embraced. No other can satisfy the soul. It alone consecrates our entire being,—soul, body and spirit,—and brings all our faculties under tribute.

Such a religion inspires us to make the best of this life and the best preparation for the life to

come. It opens our hearts like the flower to receive the light and love of Heaven, that we might gladden the heart of man with beauty and fragrance. Simeon had not only faith and love, but hope; not only piety, but patience. He "waited for the consolation of Israel." He was not only right in relation to humanity in general but to his own nation in particular. He was not only pious but patriotic, and patriotic because he was pious. True piety is ever patriotic and true patriotism is ever patient. The national hope flourished in Simeon's honest heart. He hoped for the restoration of Israel and longed for the time when He might appear who would console Israel. He was well versed in the history of his people, was as sanguine as any in the hope for the redemption of Israel and the restoration of the honor and happiness of his nation. He was patriotic enough to be sanguine and sanguine enough to "wait." Was not this the promise of God? Had not the Messiah, the consummation of national hope, been promised? God would surely redeem that promise, and was not the time for the fulfillment of the prophecy drawing nigh when the given Saviour would take the place of the given signs? He looked for the "consolation of Israel." He lifted up his eyes, and shading them with his hands strove to see His approach. It was not a

passing glance with which he scanned the scene, but a sincere, steady stare, for well he knew that He was nigh. His soul burned within him with joyous expectation of His appearing. What a time of rejoicing it would be when the "consolation of Israel" would come! The national sins, with their offspring, suffering and shame, would vanish in the light of the sun of righteousness as darkness disappears when the sun ascends his throne. "Consolation of Israel." That name contained Simeon's heart, hope, happiness and Heaven. What a beautiful and expressive name for the Messiah who would enter into the sorrows of Israel with a sympathy strong enough to steal away their sharpness! He would fill their hearts with holiness, their homes with happiness and their history with honor. Simeon had compassion for his people, though cognizant of their criminal conduct, and confidence in God for the redemption of His promise, though conscious of his nation's crucial condition. Although everything appeared against the redemption of Israel, faithful was He who had promised and mighty in power. He would surely bring it to pass. Thus he had faith in God, hope in Christ, and love for the divine promises. These three graces never meet in any character without attracting another. As the three young men in the fiery furnace enjoyed

the constant presence of "one like unto the Son of Man," so faith, hope and love are ever crowned with the abiding presence and the unction of the Holy Spirit. "The Holy Ghost was upon him." This was a special mark of divine approbation, given to sanctify the servant and to seal the service. It was a reward which the favorites of divine love alone were privileged to receive. But God has no favorites, save those who are faithful above their fellows in following the promptings of divine love. All such will be favored with the choicest gifts of Heaven. The presence of the Spirit was an additional and sure sign of the approach of the Saviour. The advent of the Spirit in this unique manner, after an absence of four hundred years, could not but be suggestive of the coming of Christ. The Holy Ghost was "upon" Simeon, not in him. Not as an inward principle, but as an outward power; not as an influence guiding from within, but as a force directing from without. This is the way in which the Holy Ghost was given to men throughout the history of the world until the Messiah came. The Holy Spirit never made the heart of man His home until Christ came to dwell in human nature. Indeed, not until human nature was glorified in Christ's Ascension did the Holy Spirit take up His abode in man. It was when Christ entered Heaven

as the representative of man that the Holy Spirit entered the human soul as the representative of God. It was when the glory of Christ filled Heaven that the glory of Heaven filled men. Then it was that men like Stephen became "full of the Holy Ghost." Men were never "*filled*" previous to this. Simeon is a good representative of the manner in which the Holy Spirit was given under the Old Dispensation, and Stephen of the manner in which it was given under the New. Thus, Christ "*filled*" men with the Holy Ghost as He had fulfilled—filled to the full—the law and the prophets, the promises and all the purposes of God. Simeon had faith in God and God had faith in Simeon. Simeon was specially interested in the coming of the "consolation of Israel," therefore God manifested special interest in him as a seeker for salvation. "It was revealed to him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ." He had familiarized himself with the Messianic prophecies. His heart burned within him as he read of the wondrous things that the Christ would accomplish. Oh, how he longed for that sacred day to dawn! Without ceasing, he lifted up his heart to God in solemn and earnest prayer, pleading that "the consolation of Israel" might come. In answer came the divine promise that he

should live to see the fulfillment of the prophecy. What an inexpressible privilege ! For thousands of years men had longed for the coming of the Lord's Christ. Thousands had been anxiously awaiting His appearing, but faithful priests and prophets had been forced to retire to rest without having their one desire granted. But Simeon is to be permitted to wait and is assured that his eyes shall not close in death before looking on the light of the world. This strongly suggests a special divine arrangement. It is the only suggestion we have of the age of this saint, but no one has failed to read the sign. Simeon is looked upon by all as a very aged man, one whose time had long come to sleep, with his fathers, in his mother's bosom. The chariot of death is arrested by Almighty God. The shadows of his day are lengthened, his " life is insured." He becomes impregnable to the darts of disease and death, holding a charmed life which death had not courage nor power to assail. He was a grand old tree, towering high above the ordinary trees in the forest of humanity, which Satan had oft sought as fuel for his fire, but which had been preserved of divine grace to stand until the King come to take possession of His estate. He was one of the choicest flowers of earth's garden, permitted to preserve its ruddy glow and sweet fra-

grance until the Master come at eve to gather it. Simeon was unwilling to die until the " Resurrection and the Life " had come unto the world. We are not surprised at this. Death was a dark territory, the sphere of solemn, sad and silent shade, until the Saviour came. He, however, carried the light of Heaven into the grave and turned the shadow of death into the clear light of morning. Simeon feared death until he could grasp the hand of the Lord of Life. He wanted the Light of the world to close his eyes, and the Everlasting Arms to embrace him in death. He might have considered it a privilege to be the first to pass over the bridge built by divine love between earth and Heaven. He wanted to see the Saviour before he saw death, and this is the secret of serenity and safety in our last sleep. Oh, how many are unfortunate enough to see death before they have seen the Saviour! Simeon did not want to leave the world until the Saviour had come to live in it. The world needed his services. He had faithfully kept vigil, and diligently sought to keep the Father's house in order until the Son would come. No man has a right to desire to die if he can do good to any one by living. While there is a soul to be saved or a child to be cared for, and while we are able to do either, it is selfishness to wish to die, and no one

has a right to be selfish. There comes a time in the history of men when their death is a greater service to humanity than a continuation of their life. We may be sure, however, that God makes no mistakes, and when He extends any life over the decreed length, He has a special purpose in so doing, and a mission which can only thus succeed. It is probable that many thought that Simeon had outlived his usefulness. What further service could he render the world? He was but a burden to himself and a care to others, and some not only wondered why he lived so long, but were impatient with him and wished he might die. But, however earnestly men desired his death, he could not die while God desired him to live. May God save us from manifesting any impatience or unkindness to those unfortunate enough to outlive their welcome. Simeon was made a great blessing before his death. However well he may have served his nation previous to this, it was in his dealings with the child Jesus at the close of his career that he rendered the greatest service to Israel. Whatever influence his life may have had upon humanity previous to this, it was when he embraced Christ that he was made the greatest blessing to the centuries. No one was better qualified than Simeon to stand in the temple and royally receive Jesus, the Lord thereof. Who

could so touchingly present as the "Lord's Christ" to the world the child Mary so tenderly presented to the Lord? No one could so efficiently bear testimony to the glorious salvation of God, or so pathetically interpret the Incarnation. Had Simeon died before this, the world would have been deprived of one of its grandest pictures and sweetest songs. The most touching tribute paid the child Jesus, and the choicest trophy won by Christianity at its birth, is the tender testimony of Simeon. To reveal Christ to the world is the greatest service any soul can render humanity or Heaven. Simeon is known to the world only because he sought to make known the Saviour. The life of every man is immortal to the extent that it makes known the Lord's Christ. All who have seen Jesus seek in their several spheres to make Him known as the Saviour. This greatest privilege of life is granted only to the soul that has sought the Saviour with sincere and self-sacrificing love. Simeon was an honest seeker for truth and one who honored all the conditions of salvation. God rewarded his faith as He does every faith, with the assurance that his search would ultimately be crowned with success. He is told that he should not "see death until he has seen the Lord's Christ."

II. SIMEON'S SEARCH.

Simeon, like every successful seeker for truth, realized that he must conform to the laws of investigation if he would be successful in the research. He knew that special discovery was only possible under certain unchanging conditions. No sincere seeker expects to find, save that for which he has made an honest search. Though such a sure promise had been given Simeon, he wisely understood it to have been given conditionally. He was conscious of the necessity of co-operating with the Spirit if he would see the "consolation of Israel." He must ever hold himself in readiness to obey every divine prompting and seek to be sensitive to every touch of the Spirit. Though guidance would come from the Spirit, obedience must come from his own soul. He must needs go to the King's Palace if he would meet the King. Hence, day after day he "goes by the spirit into the temple." He intuitively felt that he would meet with Him there. Surely, one of the first places the Son would visit on arriving in the earth would be the "Father's House." Thus Simeon sought the Saviour in the best place. The sanctuary, made sacred by the soul-service of saints and sanctified by the presence of the Spirit, is the place where most men have

sought and found the Saviour. Let us go to the Lord's House, if we would meet the Lord. Simeon sought not only in the right place, but in the right spirit. He went "by the spirit into the temple." This is the only worthy and wise way in which to go to the house of God,—under the guidance of the Spirit, walking, like Enoch walked, with God. No one can go thus unless they have love in their hearts, faith in their souls and praise-offerings on their lips. Simeon went into the temple in the proper spirit because he went for the supreme purpose of meeting the Saviour. This is the only worthy motive in entering the house of God. Simeon sought in the best spirit, in the best sphere, for the best gift. Heaven approved of his manner and motive as a seeker for the Saviour, and therefore rewarded his search with success. No one succeeds in any other way; no soul can fail that seeks in this way. Like every seeker for truth, Simeon had his difficulties. Every success worth securing implies struggle. Simeon had much to discourage him and try his faith; many times had he been to the temple, fully expecting to meet Jesus there, but returning home again with a disappointed heart and feeble step, thinking that his mission had been a failure. The enemy would suggest that it was useless for him to try his strength in thus entering the temple

only to be disappointed. He would surely sleep with his fathers long before the prophecy would be fulfilled. What signs were there of His coming? Moreover, every ache of his body and white hair in his head declared that his dissolution was near, and the devil would oft seek to employ his bodily weakness to weaken his faith. But faith's most fiery hour of trial is the one nearest faith's final triumph. Simeon's confidence remained unshaken and his faith firm. His fidelity to the divine promptings proved that his faith was unwavering, for faith alone can nourish fidelity. See him going to the temple on that memorable morn. The old man with his bent figure stooping gracefully like a shock of corn in its season, ripe and ready to be gathered into the garner; his silvery hair, a fitting emblem of the purity of his soul. Love lends light to his countenance and hope beams in his eye. Staff in one hand, the other linked for support in the arm of a friend, slowly he moves toward the temple gate. His friend would fain dissuade him from undertaking what was to him an arduous task. With trembling voice, in broken words full of emotion and the fervor of hope, Simeon replies, "My Father has promised that I shall not see death until I have seen the 'consolation of Israel,' and I know that He is faithful. Moreover, He must be about to come.

My house of clay is crumbling fast and the nearer the grave I am getting, the nearer is the approach of the Lord's Christ. I am more anxious than ever to visit the temple to-day, indeed, the attraction is so unusually strong that I am almost confident He is on the way and I must needs be in the temple to welcome Him. After waiting so long I must have the privilege in person of delivering up the keys to His safe keeping. Nothing could keep me home to-day." The temple is reached. Among its sacred shrines, what holy thoughts occupy his mind! He loves, oh how ardently, everything connected with that grand old temple. His memory runs over scores of years in which he has worshipped there. His comrades, where are they? He seems to be the only one left. Why has his life been spared? Simply because the Lord is faithful and will fulfill His promise of permitting him to see the Lord's Christ before seeing death. He bows his head and worships. Earnestly he pleads with Heaven that at last the "consolation of Israel" might come, the Saviour appear. The prayer ended, he lifts up his eyes, and his gaze is fixed upon two humble peasants bearing their child to present Him to the Lord. At the very sight, indescribable joy fills his heart and thrills his entire being. He knows not why, until the Holy Spirit whispers that the

promise made so long ago is now redeemed, that the Messiah is in the arms of that peasant woman. He is anxious to believe the word, faith fighting bravely against unbelief. He moves forward, wondering within himself if that little child is He who will redeem Israel. Is it possible that the consolation of Israel is that helpless babe? Is it true that of all humanity those two humble peasants were chosen of Heaven to nurse the Saviour of the world? Who would have expected Almighty power to be incorporated in such a frail frame? How greatly was his faith tried, but in spite of dark doubt he moves on until he has reached Mary, and bending over her shoulder he gazes upon the face of the child Jesus, and in the light of Heaven which flooded that countenance his doubt disappears and the full light of faith fills his soul. There can be no mistake. He is indeed the long-desired One, the "consolation of Israel." Mary turns and looks admiringly on Simeon, who stands transfigured before her, and whose eyes are still riveted by love on the child she loves so well. Heaven is in the old man's heart and his heart is in his eyes. Hesitatingly he asks, "May I take for a moment thy child in my arms, my daughter?" Mary could hardly part with Him even for a moment, or trust to any one the treasure so sacred to her, but there is so much

of Heaven in the old man's face that she decides to grant his request. As he takes the child in his embrace, in tender tones he says: "My arms are indeed weak and feeble to hold such a weight of glory, but they never felt stronger than now. No harm shall befall Him. He has been enthroned in my heart for many long years, and at last I am permitted to embrace Him. What high honor! Heaven can grant me no greater privilege than to press the 'consolation of Israel' to my heart." What a grand picture! Simeon making a cradle of his arms to rock the Creator of the world. The aged Jew and the child Jesus. The Old Covenant crowning the New. The Israelite transformed into a Christian. The last link of the Old Dispensation being forged by love into the New. The best of earth embracing the best of Heaven! Thus did Simeon succeed in his search for the Saviour.

III. SIMEON'S SUCCESS AND SONG.

The secret of Simeon's success is that he sought in the right spirit, season and sphere. He sought thus because he responded perfectly to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. No soul will succeed in finding the Saviour save in this way; no soul will seek in this way without being rewarded with success. Implicit confidence in God and absolute obe-

dience to the guidance of the Holy Spirit are the two imperative conditions of success in finding the Saviour. The Holy Spirit is the only guide to Jesus, and to Jesus only does the Holy Spirit guide. He guides unto all truth, that is, truth in all its parts, but this He does only that the soul might be led into sympathy and conformity with the absolute truth—Jesus Christ. Simeon and the Spirit is the only explanation of Simeon and the Saviour. Simeon was so sensitive to the touch of the Spirit that he saw the Saviour during His first visit to the temple. This was the first time for any one to meet with Him there, and the first time in all probability in which it was possible for Simeon to meet Him. He who had sought diligently and devoutly for the Lord's Christ, reverently received, and rejoicingly embraced Him when found. The soul knows no greater serenity, satisfaction or success than to embrace the Saviour. When Simeon embraced the Saviour he held in his arms the sacrifice for sin, and the secret of the soul's salvation was solved. Thus did Simeon literally "hold forth the word of life" and "lay hold on eternal life." It was then the Christian graces were made complete in the character of Simeon: his faith and hope were then crowned with the charity of Christ. Law and grace met in close embrace; mercy and truth kissed

each other. The soul is satisfied only when it embraces Divine Love, and when satisfied it soars on the silvery pinions of praise to the heart of God. The moment Simeon embraced Christ he "blessed God." Jesus influences thus all who receive Him. He leads all men to the Father and fills the soul with grateful praise to God. Every soul privileged to see the Son seeks the Father. Christ in the arms means peace in the soul, and peace in the soul means praises on the lips. Well may he sing who hath seen God's salvation. The secret and source of all song is the Saviour. Jesus is the inspiration of all music, and all who embrace Him are inspired to sing. Perennial praise streams in sweet song from the soul privileged to touch the Prince of Peace. The soul's pent-up joy in the possession of pardon, purity and peace must ever find vent in praise. The soul sings only when the secret spring of love is touched. The soul of song is the song of the soul; the song of the soul is the song inspired by the Saviour. Such was the song of Simeon, and such is the song of every saint. The Saviour stirs the soul of the saint to song; the song of the saint stimulates the sinner to seek the Saviour. Salvation is ever the subject of the saint's song and the sweet refrain of the song of every soul. Simeon's song is immortal, for it tells how his soul found salva-

tion in the Saviour. To him, salvation and the Saviour were one and the same. The theology of Simeon's song, if not exhaustive is comprehensive. It views salvation in relation to the individual, to the nation and to the world. It looks upon salvation as bringing "peace" to the individual, "glory" to the nation and "light" to the world. Thus Simeon's song shows his spiritual insight into the mystery of salvation to be keener and his outlook on the mission of the Messiah to be wider than that of any man previous to the Lord's death. The glorious results of Gospel salvation are compressed into the compass of his song. Salvation is shown to be from God, through Christ, for universal man. It is from God He has "prepared" it; it is a conception of His mind and a product of His heart. It is the salvation of God in very truth, partaking of His nature and revealing His glory. God is in it, God is through it, God is for it, therefore Simeon says, "Mine eyes have seen *Thy salvation*." It is through Christ; He is the salvation,—the means of deliverance, the Mediator, the incarnate love of God. It is for universal man; it is a light to the Gentiles. As it is from God it could not be otherwise. A salvation which meets the needs of all classes and conditions of men can alone be a salvation from God. Thus Simeon had a glimpse of the universal Fatherhood of God,

the universal brotherhood of man, and the universal fellowship of faith. If he viewed salvation from the Israelitish standpoint, he did so with Christian insight and catholicity. It is "prepared before the face of all people," "a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel." It is true salvation is considered as "the glory of Israel," but it constitutes the glory of Israel only as it uplifts the world from moral darkness into God's own light. True, the light starts from Israel, but the length of its circuit alone determines its lustre at its source. It is a glory to Israel because it is a light to the Gentiles. How well Simeon understood not only the universal nature of salvation, but its specific influence and result. It is a "light" and a "glory." Light ever precedes and is the condition of glory. God saves through moral suasion and intellectual enlightenment. Salvation is a light from Heaven, revealing the nature of God, of the soul, and of sin; revealing the way of holiness, happiness, Heaven. What word more comprehensive of the work of salvation in the soul than "light?" Light not only reveals, but is pure and purifying. It brings to life, and preserves in life. It is revealing, purifying, life-giving. No name is more suggestive and significant for the Saviour of man than "the light of the world." That which is light brings

“glory.” Glory is the crown of light. Salvation is in very truth the glory of God and man. The glory of any soul is to become a light to the world. To minister to the world’s salvation is the glory of any nation. Israel, or indeed any nation, is indebted for all glory to “the light of the world.” Emmanuel is humanity’s “light” and “glory.” But the sweetest strain in Simeon’s song is that which tells what salvation meant to his own soul. Indeed, his song owes its being and its beauty to what he experienced of redeeming love in his own soul. His song only expressed the music with which his soul was filled when looking on the salvation of God. The keynote of his song is, “Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.” Simeon never appreciated eyes as he did when he looked on the face of the child Jesus. The eye is a prophecy of beauty, but the prophecy is never fulfilled until the beauty of holiness is seen in the Lord’s Christ. It is then man beholds, undimmed and unmarred, the image of God in human nature, ineffable love incarnate in human flesh. To see God’s salvation alone fills the soul with peace and the heart with the holiness which longs for Heaven. To see Him who “brought life and immortality to light,” alone can so illuminate the dark territory of death as to enable man in peace to die. “Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.”

The "now" marks the only time in Simeon's history when it could have been possible for him to depart in peace. He could never have been satisfied to die, until he had seen the Lord's Christ, neither could he have died in peace had he not seen the Prince of Peace. He ever longed to live until the Messiah came; now he longs to die because he has seen the Lord's salvation. The superficial will be surprised at this, but the spiritually minded and he who is sensitive to things spiritual will understand that it is of all things the most natural. Does the child long for home? Is it strange that rivers seek the ocean? Why should not the soul, in moments of supreme spiritual ecstasy, long to soar to the sphere where it may commune with God, untrammelled by the limitations of time? Simeon well knew that the world was never so promising a place in which to live as when the Messiah had come to dwell in it. He would make the wilderness to blossom like the rose and prove Himself to be the "consolation of Israel." But he had read a message of love from his Father in the face of Jesus, which had made him long for home. He had seen all that was worth seeing when he had seen the Saviour. He saw so much of Heaven in the face of Jesus that his heart was already there. Moreover, he knew that He would be "spoken against," and

that a sword would pierce the soul of Mary. He did not want to live to see his Lord ill-treated. He could not bear the thought of living to see Jesus the "despised and rejected of men" and "led as a sheep to the slaughter." Every Christian would rather die than live to see his Christ crucified. "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace," "for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." This is the secret of a happy death. Jesus was born that men might see Him, and in seeing Him lose their dread of death. Simeon held Jesus in his arms, and a little while after Simeon was "safe in the arms of Jesus." Simeon was permitted to hold the Saviour in his arms because the Lord had long been enthroned in his heart. Simeon died in the arms of Jesus because he had found the way into His holy heart. Simeon was the first to see Jesus as the Saviour of the world, and the first to die a Christian. For eternity, interest will be felt in him who was privileged to hold the eternal God in His embrace. When Christ came from Heaven to earth, Simeon left earth for Heaven. Christ came from Heaven to earth, that all who would believe in Him might go from earth to Heaven. Thus closes this noble life; Simeon "was not, for God took him." Earth can afford to lose Simeon, for Christ has come. Heaven had lost so much in the

departure of the only-begotten Son, that it gladly welcomed Simeon to the family circle. Christ was God's last message of love to the world; Simeon was the first message of love that Jesus sent from earth to Heaven. If Jesus was Heaven's Christmas gift to the world, then was Simeon earth's New Year's gift to Heaven. Jesus sent Simeon to glory as a specimen of the work of redeeming love in the world. Simeon had so pressed Christ to his heart that he had pressed himself into the heart of Holiness and Heaven, and this is the secret of salvation. He became so full of the glory of God when he embraced the Lord's Christ, that earth could hold him no longer, for Heaven alone was fit to be his home.

THE UPLIFTED CHRIST AND UPLIFTED HUMANITY.

“ And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself.”—JOHN 12: 32.

Of all words that fell from the lips of Him who spake as never man spake, none are more startling or suggestive than the words of the text. It will, however, be impossible to understand their significance or appreciate their strength until we are able to look upon the cross with the eye of the Jew, and thus realize what it meant to Jesus. We have become so accustomed to view the cross of Christ from the Christian standpoint, while permitting all its glorious achievements to color our conception, that it is almost impossible for us to look upon it from the Jewish standpoint. For this reason, many are unable to perceive the Heaven-born heroism, the calm courage, unequaled confidence and matchless love manifested in these words. To the Jew, to be crucified was to be doomed to eternal dishonor through the most disgraceful death. Accursed in

the estimation of the law and of the people was every one who was crucified. Rome usually thought too much of her own dignity to disgrace herself by crucifying her most criminal citizen. No one understood the cross, all in all, its shame and its suffering, better than did Jesus Christ. He knew what the Jew thought of it and understood that in cruelty and in disgrace it satisfied the cravings of His enemies. He realized what to be crucified meant—physically, mentally and nationally. He knew every inch of the way to the cross, and from the cross to the grave. He was fully conscious of all that He would have to endure in redeeming the world, yet when near His cross and with Calvary in full view, He utters these words so full of the assurance of triumph and victory. He does not seem to see the shame of the cross, but literally turns the shame into glory. He shrinks not from the humiliation of the cross, but transfigures it into glorification. He seeks not to be delivered from the cross, but with the eagerness of love rushes on to embrace it as the means of uplifting Himself and increasing His power to uplift humanity. He saw in the cross only truth's triumph and virtue's victory. What faith, hope and love! What divine self-forgetfulness! Not a sign of fear, although His soul was full of the anxiety of love. Not a word concerning the sacrifice, the

suffering or the shame, but turning the shadow of death into the clear light of morning by explaining the efficacy of the Atonement in the words, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself." The cross cast its deep shadows all along the path of Christ. He carried it throughout His public life. He probably did not realize that He would be crucified, until the close of that memorable conflict in the wilderness, but ever since that time the weight of the cross rested on His body until the weight of His body rested on the cross. How rough the road the Saviour trod! His hands and feet were torn by the thorns, and the blood He lost along His pathway clearly indicates the way the Master went. It was such a heavy cross,—the cross of humanity, to be carried so long over such rough places, with His flesh torn, His shoulder furrowed by the scourge until the cross touched the bone. What wonder that He should fall under its weight! It could not be otherwise if in truth He was man. But if His physical nature gave way under the strain He was morally strong enough to lead the crowd to Calvary. He ever walked before His cross, not after it. Even on the way to Calvary Christ was the conqueror, not the conquered. Suffering held no surprise for the Saviour; the cross covered no cruelty from Christ; death had no secret

anguish, no unknown agony reserved from the Redeemer. To die was not a new experience to Jesus; He had been through the struggle of death and secured the victory of the Resurrection before it had been possible for Him to bring back Lazarus to life. He crucified Himself in Gethsemane before it was possible for men to crucify Him on Calvary. He had pierced His own heart, else no sword would have been keen enough to pierce His side. Love alone could compel Him to die, and of His own free will laid He down His life. No heart conscious of these things can fail to note the all-conquering courage of Christ when He says, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Myself." In the verse preceding the text the Saviour speaks of Satan's downfall, and in the text of His own uplifting. He connects both with the cross and looks upon the crucifixion as the direct cause of one and the other. Jesus looks upon the cross not as a part of His humiliation, but rather of His glorification. He not only sees Himself uplifted from and through humiliation, but realizes in His greatest humiliation His greatest exaltation and glory. The measure of His humiliation is the measure of His glorification. Christ was not only glorified because He in love humbled Himself even unto death, but the moment He reached the lowest point in His humiliation He

touched the highest point in His glorification. This is the reason why Christ connects the cross with His own uplifting. The Saviour speaks of the crucifixion as the time when He will be "lifted up," and clearly shows that His uplifting on the cross is a condition and a certainty that through the cross the world will be uplifted. Christ and man are both humbled under the cross, uplifted on the cross, and glorified through the cross. Humiliation under the cross, uplifting on the cross, glorification through the cross. The earth is where crosses are found; Calvary is where crosses are planted; Heaven is where crosses are lost. Earth has its cross, its Calvary, and its Christ; Heaven has its Christ, its crown, but no cross; Hell has its cross, but no Christ, Calvary nor crown. But we are in Calvary to-day in the uplifting of Christ and in the uplifting of the world. Jesus Christ is the first and final fact of the text, as He is ever the sun around which revolve in a rich galaxy all the glorious truths of salvation. He is the great moral magnet which draws humanity to Himself. The words "lifted up" and "draw" are synonymous, for it is the uplifted Christ who draws. He draws to Himself, therefore to "draw" is to uplift, so that our subject is—*The Uplifted Christ and Uplifted Humanity.*

The world uplifts Christ on the cross, and Christ,

through the cross, uplifts the world. Humanity uplifts itself in uplifting Christ, and Christ uplifts Himself in uplifting humanity. Christ emphasizes His own uplifting on the cross as the only condition imperative to the uplifting of humanity, through the cross, and this brings us to consider,—

I. CHRIST UPLIFTED ON THE CROSS.

The civilized world is agreed that the darkest spot on man's character is the crucifixion of Christ. The world readily points to Calvary as the place where man is seen at his worst, and the church points to it as the place where God is seen at His best. The tragedy of the cross is an ever-recurring fact. In a physical sense, Christ was only crucified once in our world, but morally He is crucified again and again. The circumstances correspond very closely ; the characters surrounding the cross are ever the same. The spirit of the self-sacrificing Saviour, His forgiving love, His strength, sympathy and spiritual sorrow, are identical. So that the uplifting of Christ on the cross is not only important and instructive as something that took place nineteen centuries ago, but especially as that which is taking place to-day. The best portrayal of the world's attitude toward Christ in the nineteenth century is its attitude toward Him in the first century. The form

of crucifixion may vary; the fact and factor never. We do not know whether Christ was crucified in any other world, but we do know that if love declared it necessary that He should die, that the Christ of Calvary could not but lay down His life. Christ would die again in our world were it necessary, but it can nevermore be necessary, manward or Godward. The crucifixion of Christ on Calvary is a physical demonstration in time of a fact having a spiritual significance and an eternal counterpart. "The Lamb of God was slain from the foundations of the world," and John beheld before the throne "a lamb as it had been slain." If words have any meaning, then these undeniably teach that the Atonement, as a fact and function, in its relation to God and its relation to man, is eternal. If the crucifixion in a spiritual sense is an ever-recurring fact, then Christ must ever be as passible, in a peculiar sense, to pain, as He was when here upon earth. To make Him otherwise would be to make Him incapable of either sympathy or suffering, sorrow or sacrifice. If in His ascension He has become impassible, then in being glorified as the Son, He has become less real as a Saviour, which is impossible. On the other hand, because He is passible to pain and pleasure He, in a unique manner, suffers as surely when men crucify Him afresh to-day as when He was crucified

on Calvary. Would any one know how and why Christ is crucified to-day? Then let them study the history of the crucifixion nineteen centuries ago. Would any one know what unbelief and sin mean to Christ to-day? Then let them picture vividly before their minds the physical, mental and spiritual sufferings attending the crucifixion of Calvary. Let no one wonder at the cruelty of the Jew without also wondering at the cruelty of the Anglo-Saxon. Do not weep because of what was done unto Jesus in Jerusalem without weeping because of what He suffers in your home and heart. Think not for a moment that if Christ lived to-day He would be better received than in the first century, for His teaching would be so much in advance of this age that men would certainly crucify Him. We might seek to destroy Him in a different manner, but we would be moved by the same motive. We can not but believe that the church, using the word for the ecclesiastical body in contra-distinction to the body of believers, would lead to-day as it did then in the attempt to put Jesus to death. Yea, verily, the church to-day is often putting Christ to open shame and crucifying afresh the Lord of Life. Thus, every fact and incident in connection with Christ's death on Calvary has for us a two-fold interest. Let us then look upon the way Christ was uplifted on the

cross. The mock trial is ended. No single charge has been substantiated against the Saviour. The judge declares that he finds no fault in Him, and yet He is delivered up to be crucified. See Him led out to be scourged. A sight that ought to make man weep tears of blood. The Son of God, with His hands tied behind Him, receiving the terrible scourge about forty times on His bare back, each cutting through the flesh to the bone. He was under the lash for about fifteen minutes. Many died under this cruel treatment. Oh how the blood oozes from His body! Roughly His garments are thrown over Him; a crown of thorns is plaited and placed on His holy head. A cross is laid on His shoulders and the crowd moves toward Calvary, They go but a little way, He silent, as a "sheep before her shearers is dumb," when He falls under the weight of the cross on His bruised shoulder. Simon then comes forward to bear the cross. I thank thee, Simon, for lending thy shoulder to bear my Saviour's, nay my own cross. Although Christ, through love, had made it His own, it was in truth our cross. Christ carried man's cross, and in a strange manner man carried Christ's cross. It must have helped Simon to bear it to know that Christ had carried it before, and especially inspiring must it have been to see Christ before him while he car-

ried it. I can not but believe that Simon was glad to help Jesus bear His cross. Who knows but that he might have been the recipient of one of Christ's many mercies? Simon but little thought how precious and sacred was the cross he carried. He knew not that, figuratively speaking, it was the material out of which the chariot of mercy would be made in which He would go home to glory. Calvary is reached. Everybody is full of excitement, save Jesus. There is the hammer, there the nails. Now Jesus is uplifted on the cross. A nail is driven through His right hand,—the hand that had been opening the eyes of the blind, the hand that had been scattering seeds of kindness, the hand that had touched the bier of the son of the widow of Nain. The man who drove the nail but little thought that it had gone through the heart of God before it could have pierced the hand of Christ, and that evermore God's heart would be riveted by love to that cross. Another nail is driven through the left hand, then a large nail is driven through both His feet,—the feet that Mary washed with her tears and wiped with the hairs of her head; the feet that had been so busy bearing to and fro the treasury of love, and carrying Heaven's gifts of mercy to the poverty-stricken world. The man who drove the nail but little thought that it would rivet the heart of hu-

manity at the feet of Jesus for evermore. And oh, wondrous sight! The weight of divinity hanging on those nails! Nay, 'twas love that held and riveted Him to that cross. Excruciating were the pains He suffered, and oh how cruel was His death! Gladly would we draw the veil over the sufferings of the Saviour. Though ostensibly many men may have suffered a more terrible and tragic death than did Christ, yet in reality, even from a physical standpoint, He suffered more in the article of death than was possible to any other, for the more spiritual the nature the more sensitive it is to all pain. We can not tell what Christ suffered or compare it with the sufferings of men, until we can understand how much more spiritual He was than all men. But this is not all, nor, indeed, the most important. Were this all, the story of the cross would never have possessed its charm for the heart of humanity. There is no intrinsic virtue in physical suffering, but often much intrinsic evil. The physical suffering of Christ is impotent to accomplish any good, save as an expression of the wealth of divine love and a part of a supreme self-sacrifice necessary for salvation. The physical suffering of Christ is not to be compared with His mental and spiritual suffering. The strength and glory of His self-sacrifice are seen, not in His physical suffering, but in His spiritual

sorrow. The supreme suffering possible to the Sinless Saviour, because of sin, was spiritual sorrow. In a unique manner Christ suffered the aggregate of all that the guilty ought, and that the guiltless could suffer for all time. Though all the spiritual anguish and the remorse of the children of men be concentrated, yet it would not compare with the suffering of Christ. All that men have suffered in earth or in Hell, He experienced in the work of Atonement. Christ was love Incarnate; nothing can suffer like love, and to be "rejected and despised" is love's greatest suffering. We must remember also the solitariness of Christ's suffering. He "trod the wine-press alone." He received no supernatural aid nor depended on any supernatural power in His spiritual sorrow and struggle for supremacy over sin. It was as the Son of Man He suffered,—that is, He employed only those resources that are at the command of all men, and gained His victory only as man may conquer. Jesus died like every other man, only that death meant more to Him. No one hated death like Christ. Everything in Him was antagonistic to it. His heart, the home of holiness, could not but hate this enemy of all good. Increased complexity means increased responsibility. Therefore Christ's complex relationship in life created crushing and overwhelming

issues in His death. Oh, how much depended on His death! Heaven and humanity are in the balances. I am glad that death meant the same to Christ as it does to every man; that he experienced all the agony and grief possible in death; that He knew how hard it is to part with the living and to feel the tenderest ties of love broken, while the spirit is ushered into the Great Beyond and overwhelmed by the reality of the Eternal. He suffered in the fullest degree the last and greatest agony possible to man. He experienced the worst death and conquered death at its worst. None but the Son of God could so suffer, or realize what it is to suffer so. The cross of Calvary was but the externalization of the real cross on which Christ was crucified. As the real cross of Christ is the sorrow of the Sinless because of sin and the ingratitude of sinners, then the Crucifixion is an ever-recurring fact, and however much He may have suffered on Calvary, He suffers more to-day. Continually the nails are driven into His hands, and ever is the sacred side pierced. After the resurrection, Jesus asked Thomas to put his finger in the nail-prints and his hand in His side. This shows that the marks remained and that the sores had not healed. We believe that for eternity Christ will bear on His body these signs of sacrifice. They are the literal

“marks of Christ.” Many men reach the Saviour’s heart through the pierced side to-day, but there is a worthier and wiser way. Thus is Christ uplifted on the cross, and He hangs between Heaven and earth, apparently rejected and repudiated of both,—deserted of God, disowned of man, unclaimed of time or eternity. What will the issue be? He is near enough to Heaven to lay hold on the hand of God, and near enough to earth to lay hold on the hand of man. Will He link them? Will He unite in His body the two worlds? Will His cross effect reconciliation and redemption, and in love leave God and man in close embrace? We can only know this when we understand the influence of the Atonement. Did the cross bring glory or dishonor to Christ? This naturally leads us to consider—

II. THE CROSS UPLIFTING CHRIST.

The cross has uplifted Christ in the estimation of Heaven and humanity. It has increased the authority of Christ in all worlds. It was in view of the Atonement that He was able to say, “All authority is given unto Me in Heaven and on earth,” and because of the cross He was able to say, “I have the keys of Hell and of death.” Without the Atonement, Christ would have been without the authority to forgive sin, consequently unqualified

to be the Saviour of the world. By means of the cross alone it was possible to enthrone Christ in the heart of man as He is always enthroned in the heart of God. As God-man, the Saviour's highest glory was attainable only through the merits of the Atonement. He had so identified Himself with humanity that in a peculiar sense it was imperative that He should uplift the human race, or forever go down with it. Christ is crowned with a glory, through the cross, which otherwise would have been unattainable. As the Son of God, He was from eternity clothed with the greatest glory. But in order to save the world, He "emptied Himself," and thus laid aside His glory, which in a mysterious sense, as the Son of Man, He looked upon as something inaccessible, save in the completion of salvation, consummate in His self-sacrifice. Throughout His public ministry He refers to the hour when the "Son of Man would be glorified," and in the chapter of the text, when the Greeks desired to see Him, He said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified." He furthermore prays that God might glorify Him with the glory that belonged to Him before the world was. These references surely teach that Christ connected His glorification with the work of salvation, and not until He uttered the words "It is finished," rose again from the dead and was received unto Heaven,

was He crowned with the supreme glory which He had secured through suffering. The Apostle says that "for the joy set before Him He endured the cross." This suggests that not only would the joy be impossible without the cross, but that as He was the Son of Man the attainable joy was an inspiration to suffer the cross. John sees Him crowned with many crowns. Without controversy these were laurels won in a lawless world, and tributes paid to Him as the Redeemer of the world by earth and Heaven. As He was man, it was true of Him, as of all men, that the way to the attainment of the highest and fullest life was through self-sacrifice. The law held good in the case of Jesus, as of all others, that "He who would save his life must lose it." Christ's greatest charm is His self-sacrificing life; the crown and consummation of His life is His sacrificial death. Christ's glory was assured when, though a Son, He "learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and being made perfect He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." This learning must be understood to mean undertaking to do for others what was not necessary for Himself. As the Sinless, He was exempt from suffering. He was free from the claim of death. There was nothing in His character which rendered suffering necessary as reformatory or re-

tributive. Therefore, death could never have gained ascendancy over Him. But in order to save man, He voluntarily suffered and died. Nevertheless, though as the Sinless He was exempt from suffering, there was a moral necessity for Him as the Saviour to endure the suffering and the shame of the cross. He was made perfect as the Captain of our salvation through suffering. In order to become efficient as the Redeemer of men, it was necessary for Him to be educated through suffering and gain the ascendancy over the heart of humanity through a pre-eminent and permanent manifestation of His power, not only to suffer but to save from suffering. In the Godward relation of the Atonement, physical suffering could not have been necessary. The spiritual sorrow of the Sinless, because of sin, as expressed in His humiliation, was probably all that could be essential. But in the manward relation of the Atonement, physical suffering was imperative, for thereby alone could the sinful appreciate the sacrifice of the Sinless and secure due appreciation of the sense of sin. The death of the cross was at once the greatest and most accessible evidence of suffering. No other form of death could have so effectually and unmistakably furnished the necessary proofs of its voluntariness. Therefore, in no other way could He have so successfully secured the

essential incentive to the faith of humanity. In order to become the object of the world's faith, it was necessary that the evidences of His voluntary suffering and atoning death be within the reach of all men. This was pre-eminently secured in the death of the cross, because of its publicity and possibility of proof. It was "not done in a corner." Moreover, the death of the cross was so gradual as to enable Him to preserve to the end the use of all His faculties. It furnished Him with the opportunity of proving the voluntariness of His death by giving up the spirit before the crucifixion could have succeeded in killing Him. He died in but half the time necessary to perish from the effects of the driven nails. He "bowed His head," and thus invited the King of Terrors, who otherwise would never have had courage to assail Him. When His side was pierced and His heart revealed, humanity stood spellbound at the revelation that He died on the cross, but not of the cross, a broken heart being the scientific cause of death. There is a sense in which it was binding upon Christ to suffer, which is emphasized in such words as "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" This "ought" implies a moral obligation; the obligation existed inasmuch that Christ had pledged Himself to the work of redemption.

Having promised, the law made it imperative that He should redeem it. But the real "ought" of all Christ's sufferings was the "ought" of love. Love was the force which made His death imperative. Love can not but love, and as the cross was necessary to remove evil from the universe, Christ could not but die. He could not "save Himself," for He loved to save others. The cross of Christ was God's most potent method of condemning sin in the heart of the sinful and of revealing divine love in the work of salvation. The suffering of Christ on the cross alone successfully showed the sacrifice God made in spirit because of sin and in order to save the sinner. Had Christ not died, He would have been destitute of the most efficient power in His personality to influence the world for righteousness—sympathy. Though Christ's sympathy, in a moral sense, would have been perfect without the Jewish murder, yet without a physical demonstration the world would never have learned rightly to estimate it, and any enhancement to Christ's influence in the moral universe is without controversy a glory to Christ. Moreover, without tasting death, Christ's power of sympathy, in a physical sense, would not have been perfect, for there would ever be one stage of suffering common to man through which He had not passed. The greatest glory of Christ is success

in the work of Atonement. Therefore, that which most enhanced salvation increased most His glory. In death He succeeded in bringing the world to look upon sin, with His eyes, judge it with His conscience, and hate it with the hatred of His holy heart, thus realizing in death what He had failed to realize in His life. It was the pierced side which revealed His heart, and His revealed heart pierced the heart of humanity. The crucified Jesus is alone the condemnation of cruelty and crime; the suffering Saviour is alone the efficient revelation of God's sense of sin and the secret of salvation. When the sinful perceives the suffering of the Sinless because of sin, and in order to save sinners, he sees the sublimity of salvation. In death alone could the life of the Sinless blossom into life for the dying sinner. The greatest triumph of saving grace is that the suffering of the Sinless, while showing His supremacy, succeeds in making the sinner sensitive to the sense of sin and the suppliant for and subject of salvation. The cross glorified Christ, because it created the channel in which the ocean of divine love could flow in a perennial stream to the heart of humanity. That which best shows the character and the life of Christ to man most glorifies Him, and the cross is the holy of holies of His heart, with the veil rent asunder. To know Christ is to love Him; to love

Him is to live for His glory. Nowhere may Christ be so well known as on Calvary. In His life men saw what He was to others; on the cross they saw what others are to Him. In life He showed how love could sacrifice; in death He showed how love could suffer. In His miracles of mercy in life His divinity transfigured His humanity; in the miracle of love in death His humanity transfigured His divinity. Given the incarnate Son of God, the Atonement could be; given the sinless Son of Man, the Atonement could not but be. It was necessary manward and Godward that Atonement should be made, and it was essential that Christ should suffer before man could appreciate the Atonement. The cross was the only bridge from earth over the chasm of Hell to Heaven which the Divine Architect had erected and approved. In death, Christ proved the strength and safety of the bridge by putting His own weight to pass over it, and being proved strong enough to support divinity, then safely could the weight of humanity be placed upon it. It might have been possible if Christ had voluntarily died in the house of His friends at Bethany that the Atonement, in its Godward relation, might have been realized. But in its manward relation it could never have been realized so effectually as through the cross. All the interests of Heaven had

been entrusted to Christ, and in a unique manner His all had been invested in the work of Atonement. The death of Calvary was the final effort of virtue to vanquish vice, and the victory of virtue was God's glory and Christ's crown. Thus the death of Christ, though intended by the hate of man to be His greatest shame, was made by God His greatest glory. "Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The cross has uplifted Christ. There is more moral magnetism in the death of Calvary than in any life. It is the cross that draws. It increased Christ's influence upon the soul and won the devotion of the human heart. Christ's hold would not have been half so great on humanity had it not been for the cross. More hearts have been moved in sympathy by the sight of the suffering Saviour and crucified love than by anything else. The cross is the greatest magnetic power of the world. Christ uplifted the cross, and the cross exalted Christ. He not only gained His crown through the cross, but He made the cross His throne, from which He rules in righteousness and governs in

grace the whole universe. Many men who despised Jesus in His life have learned to love Him in His death. If enemies in cruelty outdid themselves in uplifting Him on the cross, it was friends who outdid themselves in love who took Him down from the cross and laid Him in the grave. Indeed the hands of enemies were never laid upon His body after His death. He had become too sacred and glorious for any hand, save the hand of faith, to touch Him evermore, and after His resurrection no eyes, save the eyes of love, were privileged to look upon Him. Every step from the cross is a step upward and Heavenward. He was crucified between two thieves. He died amidst nature's groanings, the hisses and curses of His enemies, the sighs and sobs of His friends. He was buried with the rich and "rose again from the dead" amidst the music of nature's harp, the rejoicings of the redeemed, and the melody of the resurrection morn. It was in death He secured the right to a grave. The earth had not expected to entertain in its bosom the Sinless. Sin had given to the sinful a chartered right to a grave, and the Sinless had to borrow the grave of the sinful in order to secure His well-earned sleep in the silent sepulchre made ever sacred. If the cross was roughly prepared by the carpenters of Jerusalem for the Carpenter of Nazareth, whose

hand had never made a cross for any one, His grave had been prepared by exacting love and made as meet as any grave could be made to entertain the temple that had entertained God. The glory of the resurrection and the glory of the Ascension would have been impossible without the cross. How different was His reception to Heaven and His reception to earth! No room for Him in the inn; no room for the royalty of Heaven. The earth seemed ill-prepared to receive Him. In many respects He was an unwelcome visitor. The door of the stable alone was open, and the manger was His first cradle. But after the work of salvation had been completed through the death of the cross, how royal a welcome home was given to Him in glory! The angels of Heaven could not remain there the morning of the Ascension. They formed the royal procession of the King of Glory, the Conqueror of Calvary. Every door in Heaven was opened and the very gates lifted up to give Him entrance. Willingly the command had been obeyed, "Lift up your heads, oh ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." Emmanuel entered into His empire through the cross. It was on Calvary He was crowned. He triumphed more in death than He did in life. Samson killed more enemies in his death than he did in his life.

The Saviour secured life to more men in dying than He did in living. Christ without the cross would be Christianity minus its charm. Theology without the Atonement is God without power to pity. The glory of Christ is evermore inseparably connected with the cross. Take away the cross, and the clearest manifestation of Christ's glory will perish. Salvation without sacrifice, a Saviour without suffering, would be the same as happiness without holiness, or Heaven apart from both. The cross has uplifted Christ.

III. CHRIST UPLIFTING THE CROSS.

Previous to the crucifixion of Christ on Calvary, the crime of crimes and criminality's consummation was to be crucified. To the Jew, the disgrace of the death was more despicable than was any dishonor damaging to the life. Every crime could be condoned, save the crime of the cross. But to be crucified was an unpardonable sin. The words "Calvary" and "cross" brought a frown to the face, fear to the frame, and fleetness to the feet of the Jew. How great the transformation! How precious is the word Calvary to us! To the Jew, Calvary was the most accursed spot of earth. To the Christian, it is Nature's holy of holies. They loathed and hated the cross. We love and reverence it.

It is the subject of our glory and of our song. Was it not on the cross that Christ died? Is it not through the cross that we have life? Is it not of the cross that the choir of Heaven so sweetly sing? Yea, from being an object of contempt the cross has become the object of the greatest reverence. The cross did not bring ignominy to His name, but His name brought glory to the cross. Instead of being accursed, it is sacred to millions. To Catholics and Protestants, it is a sign of the most sacred service and a symbol of the spirit of self-sacrifice. It is worn by millions on their hearts, and treasured in the hearts of many more. It is the symbol of peace in the heart, penitence and piety in the soul, and purity and praise on the lips. So that instead of the cross bringing dishonor to Christ, Christ brought glory to the cross. Figuratively speaking, the nails driven into the Saviour's hands and feet carried life before them into the cross. By dying on the cross, Christ has uplifted and transformed it from an infamous implement to destroy life into a glorious instrument through which life is saved. In the very city, in the very century in which Christ was crucified, the cross ceased to be looked upon as the way of death, and became honored as the way of life. Even in a few weeks after Christ's crucifixion in Jerusalem, the place of all others where the cross

was hated with the most cruel hatred, it became loved by thousands above all their treasures as the sublime symbol of what God suffered in spirit on account of sin and what the Sinless Son sacrificed to save the sinner. Thus the shame of the cross became the glory of Christ, and the suffering of Christ became the glory of the cross. The cross crowned the glory of Christ, and in dying upon it Christ crowned the cross with glory. It was necessary that Christ should uplift the cross before it was possible for Him, through the cross, to uplift the world. The cross was the agent, the magnet, the lever in the uplifting of humanity. Men thought that when the nails were driven into the hands of Christ that once and forever He was cast out of the heart of humanity, and that the nails barred eternally the door against Him. Instead of that, men only placed in His hands the material with which He made a key to open the lock of the human heart. Yea, the cross is the key of love which opened the heart of God to man, and the heart of man to God. From a lifeless tree the cross has been transformed and made living and fruitful. It bears leaves that are ever green, "and are for the healing of the nations." It bears on its branches the richest fruit of love, to feed hungering souls. The tree of Calvary will live when every other tree

will die. It will flourish for eternity on the banks of the river of life, bearing its fruit of love, to the delight of God, the glory of Christ, and the life of the redeemed. It will form one of the chief adornments and attractions of the Paradise of God, the home of holiness. Thus do trees and men blossom at the living touch of the Lord of Life.

IV. THE UPLIFTED CHRIST, THROUGH THE UPLIFTED CROSS, UPLIFTING HUMANITY.

Man uplifted Christ on the cross, the cross uplifted Christ, Christ uplifted the cross, and Christ through the cross uplifts man. The text unmistakably teaches that the purpose of the Atonement is the transformation of humanity into absolute conformity with Jesus Christ. The moral aim of the cross is to make man like Christ in character and glory, and therefore in the highest harmony with holiness. Its motive is to uplift man into perfect obedience to the divine will, the realization of the divine purposes, and thus fill him with the life and glory of God. Thus salvation means conformity to Christ. Conformity to Christ is impossible save through the cross. The cross not only revealed God's ideal to man, but made its attainment and realization possible to man. The object of the cross is to draw man into conformity with Christ, and

thus uplift fallen humanity to the highest attainment of holiness and happiness. Christ died, not to seal His teaching, not to reveal the nature of God nor of sin, not to satisfy the claims of the law, not to pay the debt of sin, but to uplift man. It is true that in His death He accomplished all this, for it was all necessary to man's salvation. But it was done as means to the end, and not as the end itself. He revealed the character and the love of God in order to win the heart of man. He met the claims of the law and paid the debt of sin, that it might be possible for holiness to pardon and love to save. But this He did that He might "draw all men" unto Himself. The cross of Christ is the divinely-ordained lever to uplift humanity. For nineteen centuries the cross of Christ has been proving itself to be the power of God to uplift man intellectually, emotionally and morally. Intellectually, it has given the human mind its greatest inspiration. It has revealed truths which have revolutionized human thought, and made knowledge accessible which illuminates the intellect of man with the light of God. Its teaching has solved some of the problems that had ever baffled the human intellect, and while satisfying the mind it has stimulated and sanctified thought. The intellectual thought of the world has practically revolved around three questions: Whence

am I? Why am I? Whither go I? On the answers to these questions depend the intellectual development of the world and the hope and happiness of humanity. The value of everything written or thought is commensurate to the light it throws upon these problems. Immanuel Kant said that it is the business of philosophy to answer three questions: What may I know? What ought I to do? For what may I hope? These are identically the questions that have ever agitated the human mind. That which gives the most satisfactory answers to these questions, therefore, must ever be considered as having rendered humanity the greatest intellectual service. To educate the intellect is to ennoble it. The cross of Christ is God's answer to these questions; it alone satisfies the intellect and the heart of humanity. To the question, "What may I know?" the cross of Christ replies, "God." It reveals to man the holiness and love of his Father in Heaven, thus furnishing him with the only explanation of life and the key into the mystery of the universe. To the question, "What ought I to do?" it replies, "Love." The cross of Christ reveals the heart of God, and so teaches man that the way to live is to love. To the question, "What may I hope?" it replies, "For holiness and Heaven." The cross of Christ is the assurance of God that holiness and

Heaven are attainable to humanity. Thus the intellectual world owes its light to the cross of Christ. The cross uplifts man emotionally. One of the strongest forces and most essential qualities in the uplifting of mankind is that of the emotions. Human love was never so intensified and sanctified as through the cross of Christ. On Calvary, love was revealed as the greatest power to uplift the world. The crucifixion was love's coronation. The cross of Christ has made humanity more sensitive to suffering and sympathetic with the sufferer. If love is the greatest factor in the life of the world, the cross of Christ is the life of love. The human heart has become so sympathetic that crucifixion as a method of capital punishment has been forgotten from the world. This is the influence of the cross of Christ. One method after another is being invented to put transgressors to death with as little pain as possible, and the day is not far distant when this method of legalized murder—capital punishment—will be forever abolished. When men have lived near enough to the cross of Christ to breathe the spirit of the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," capital punishment will be viewed as a relic of barbarism. Human sympathy seeks to alleviate suffering, to uplift the fallen, to provide for the perishing, to relieve the

oppressed and to care for the dying with a self-sacrifice unknown before the death of Incarnate love on Calvary. Is liberty taking the place of slavery, arbitration taking the place of war, charity taking the place of cruelty? This is but the influence of the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ is uplifting humanity morally. The most fatal blow that immorality ever received was the death of the cross. The cross is the greatest moralizing force in the world. Wherever the cross is loved, there purity and morality are honored. Selfishness and sensuality are paralyzed in the presence of the self-sacrifice of the Son of God. If the cross does not create in us a loathing of sin and a love of holiness, then there is no power in the universe of God that can so move us. The cross has shown self-sacrifice to be the crown of life, and selfishness the ruin of the race. Are personal purity and national righteousness at a premium? Then the cross of Christ does uplift man. The cross of Christ uplifts humanity to the possible possession of eternal life. It cancels for the innocent and irresponsible the evil of collective sin, and for the guilty it makes full and free redemption possible. It uplifts man to a right relationship with God, and consequently to all virtue and grace. It uplifts the guilty by justifying him, the unclean by sanctifying him, the dead by giving

him life. It uplifts the soul to associate with the pure and sanctified—yea, God. Whoever is going to be uplifted through the cross must needs be uplifted on the cross. Christ, through the cross, is uplifting humanity. Christendom is only a proof of the uplifting power of the cross. The cross is drawing to-day in all lands. Christ is verily fulfilling His promise of drawing all men unto Himself. He is the Saviour, not only of the individual, but of society; the Redeemer, not of one nation, but of all the human race. The cross of Christ is to be the means of uplifting “all men.” Humanity went down as a whole in its representative Adam, but came up as a whole in its representative, the second Adam. If we would rightly interpret the words of the text, it is imperative that we avoid with the greatest jealousy limiting in any wise the “all men.” It means not the elect; it means humanity. It speaks of the organic salvation of the human race. While the teaching of Christ Himself makes it impossible for us to believe in Universalism—the salvation of every man—nevertheless we rejoice to believe that Christ Himself teaches that though some may be lost, like the branches cut off from the vine, yet that the organic whole will be preserved through salvation. Thank God for racial redemption, a universal salvation, a world-wide uplifting of man.

Christ is drawing. He will draw until "all men" have been uplifted above everything mean, selfish and unholy, into the clear light of holiness, where with Christ they shall reign, filled with the same glory, enjoying the same victory, world without end. How glorious is the influence of the cross of Christ! It modifies for good every portion of Jehovah's vast empire,—material, mental, moral, terrestrial and celestial. Even Hell is better off because of the Atonement. The cross of Christ has an uplifting influence on the whole universe of God. How glorious, how wise, how beneficent. The cross of Christ is to be the center of the universe, the light and life of all, as the sun is the center of our solar system. If our world, through sin, had become out of sympathy with the moral aim of the universe, and struck a discordant note which marred the melody of the sublime symphony, through the cross it has enriched the music of the universe and perfected the melody of every world. Every creature in the vast dominion of God, according to his sensibility, suffered on account of sin. The higher the being, the keener the suffering. If the cross of Christ is but the outward manifestation of the sorrow and sacrifice of the spirit of God because of sin, then how greatly was He moved and influenced by it! If God was thus influenced, of necessity all His

creatures must have suffered according to their several susceptibilities. Our world, therefore, lessened the aggregate happiness of the universe through sin, but, thank God, through the cross it has vastly contributed to the welfare of all created beings. All who suffered because of sin, of necessity participate in the joys of redemption. The good that befalls any world can not but affect the universe, for the same reason that evil can not be limited in its influence. The cross means a transformed humanity; a transformed humanity means a transformed earth; a transformed earth means a transformed universe. The cross of Christ has increased the happiness of the universe. Jesus Christ is the universal Saviour, and conformity to Him is the goal of all intelligent created beings. The cross is the most invincible evidence of grace, the most perfect expression of divine love, suffering unto sacrifice, in order to save. Therefore, the cross must increase the aggregate happiness of the universe and the specific happiness of all created intelligencies. The better the God of love is known, the greater the happiness of His creatures. We thank God that the cross of Christ not only uplifts the world, but uplifts the universe, and that cosmic transformation is the aim and will be the crown of the cross of Christ,

